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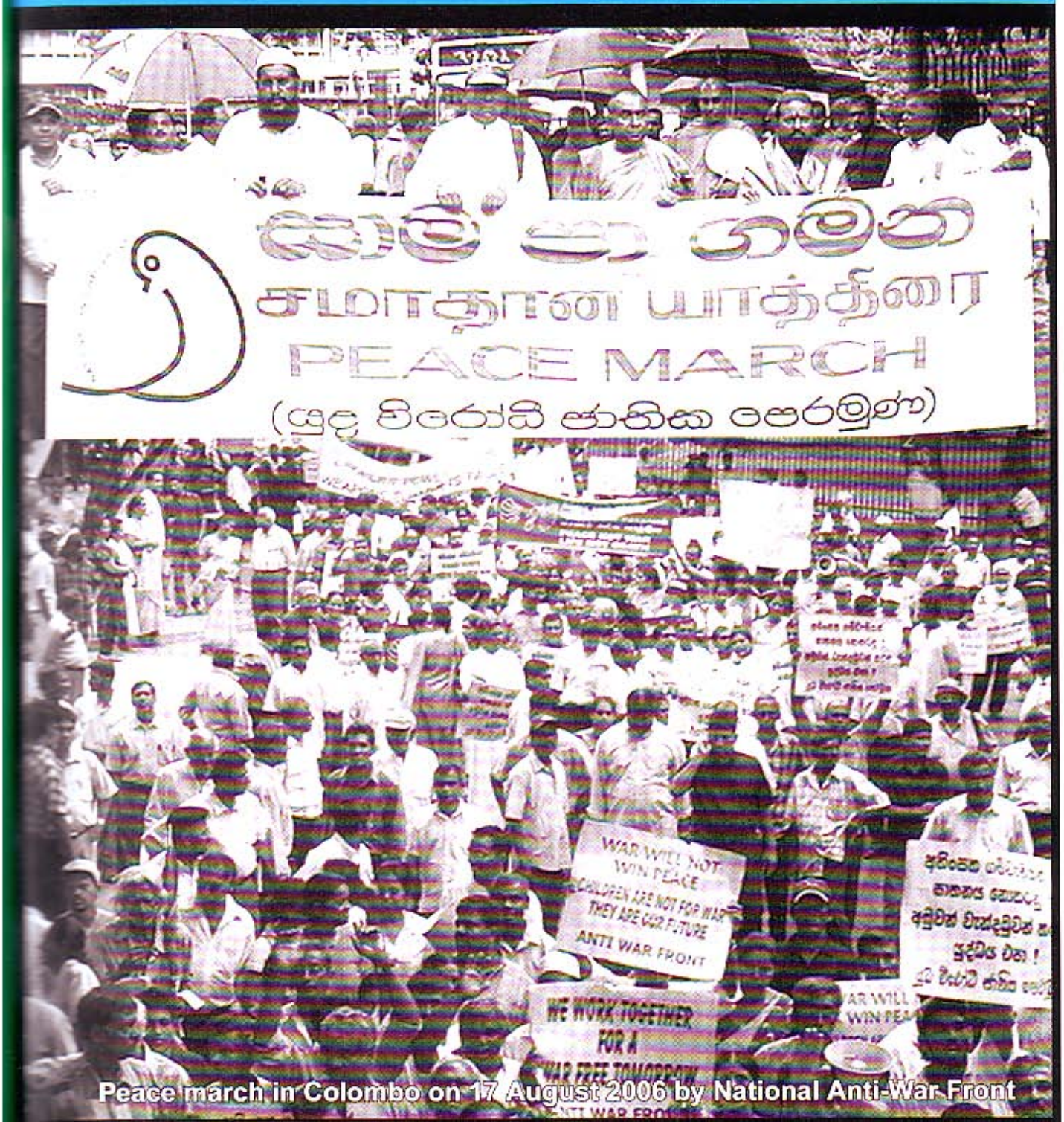

Peace march in Colombo on 17 August 2006 by National Anti-War Front

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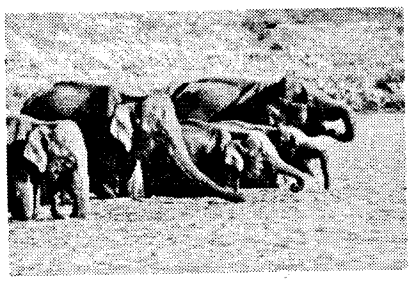

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Eelam War IV and the Humanitarian Crisis

The Government and the LTTE are at war. Yet they say that they are committed to the Ceasefire Agreement signed in February 2002. The contradiction between their words and actions cannot be any sharper. The countless ever increasing number of violent incidents that have been taking place since December last year in gross violation of the ceasefire has now inexorably led to the outbreak of the undeclared Eelam War IV with the dispute over the shutting of the sluice gates of Mavil Aru in the Trincomalee district by the LTTE and the action resorted to by the Government to resolve it militarily.

Soon the theatre of war was widened and spread to the north covering the Wanni region, Muhamalai, Kilaly, Nagarkoil, Mandatitivu, Kayts and the Jaffna peninsula.

Although there have been conflicting claims and counter-claims from both sides as to the number of casualties from both sides, what is indisputably true is that there have been hundreds of soldiers and Tamil Tigers killed or injured in the northern and eastern fronts.

By any reckoning, some of the incidents that have occurred since the latest round of fighting began are truly appalling, many which represent gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian laws. The following are some the more glaring examples of serious incidents to which human rights organisations including the Amnesty International have drawn attention:

★ The killing, execution style, of 17 aid workers of the French aid agency Action Against Hunger (Action Contre la Faim, or ACF) were discovered lying face-down on the front lawn of ACF's Muttur office, with bullet wounds indicating that they had been shot at close range. (6 August)

★ Hundreds of Muslim civilians fleeing the fighting in Muttur were diverted by the LTTE into an area under its control. An unknown number of Muslim men were allegedly separated from the group and taken away with their hands tied and later killed, execution style.(4 August)

★ A claymore landmine reportedly hit an ambulance killing five people - a medical doctor, his wife, two nurses and the driver of the ambulance. The incident occurred in LTTE-controlled territory near the village of Nedunkerny, in Vavuniya district. The government and the LTTE have accused each other for the attack.(8 August)

★ Renewed aerial bombardment by the Sri Lankan air force of LTTE-controlled areas in Trincomalee district reportedly resulting in a number of civilian casualties. The LTTE claimed that at least 50 civilians were killed and more than 200 wounded. (10 August)

★ Rockets and artillery shells reportedly hit the St. Philip Neryy Church and surrounding homes in Allaipiddy in Kayts islet, killing at least 15 civilians and wounding 54.There were conflicting reports as to whether the shells were fired by government forces or by the LTTE. (13 August)

★ As many as 51 teenage girls (aged 17 to 20) were killed and more than 100 wounded when Sri Lankan Air Force carried out a bombing raid on a compound in the northern district of Mullaitivu, in LTTE-controlled territory. (14 August) The LTTE said that victims were following a first aid course, but the government claimed that they targeted a Tamil Tiger military training camp)

★ A car bomb attack on S. Sivathasan, a senior member of the Eelam

People's Democratic Party and former Member of Parliament, killed the politician's bodyguard and a three-year-old child who happened to be standing near the roadside. S. Sivathasan and five other civilians were injured in the blast. (12 August)

★ Suspected LTTE gunmen assassinated Ketheshwaran Loganathan, the Deputy Secretary General of the Peace Secretariat and former director of the Colombo-based Centre for Policy Alternatives, a research centre that specializes in conflict resolution and good governance. (12 August)

★ A bomb hit a convoy carrying the Pakistan's High Commissioner Bashir Wali Mohamed; the ambassador escaped without injury, but at least seven people were killed in the blast including four military bodyguards and three civilian bystanders. (14 August)

Government forces have been carrying out bombing raids and both sides have been subjecting each other's military positions to long range artillery and rocket fire in the course which many civilians have been injured or killed. Neither party appears to be taking adequate precautions to protect civilian lives.

In a matter of two weeks, the fighting between the Tamil Tigers and government forces has resulted in the displacement of over a hundred thousand civilians and scores of civilians killed or injured. Movement of people from the areas of fighting have been blocked and the ability of humanitarian organisations to provide much needed relief to the affected people has been severely restricted. Sri Lanka today is facing an emerging humanitarian crisis of alarming proportions.

As the International Commission of Jurists has pointed out, both parties to the conflict are bound by Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and by those rules of international humanitarian law that have become part of customary international law. Common Article 3 provides that civilians and other non-combatants are protected against violence to life and person, in particular murder, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture; hostage taking; humiliating and degrading treatment; and the passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court. It is a crime under international law to commit a serious violation of Common Article 3, as well as to commit other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in internal conflicts, including intentionally directing attacks against civilians or against religious or educational buildings. Individuals can be prosecuted for such crimes in Sri Lanka and in other countries. The Government is also bound by international human rights law.

NEWS REVIEW

UNHCR seeks humanitarian access to reach affected people

Aug 18 - We and our partners are now seriously concerned about the welfare of civilians in areas inaccessible to humanitarian agencies because of strictly enforced travel restrictions, as fighting continues in the north and east of Sri Lanka, UNHCR said.

UNHCR calls on the Sri Lankan government and the rebel Tamil Tigers, or Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), urgently to allow access for humanitarian aid workers so vital supplies can reach those in need, and to permit freedom of movement to all affected populations.

With the closure of the A9 access road to the Jaffna peninsula through LTTE-controlled Kilinochchi District, supplies of food and water have fallen to alarmingly low levels in many locations. As a result, people are hoarding food, and merchants are sharply hiking prices in local markets.

The situation in Point Pedro, in the north of the Jaffna peninsula, is even more fluid and unpredictable than in Jaffna town. Whereas people in the town have sought refuge in large communal buildings, in Point Pedro displaced civilians are staying in vacant homes and with host families. UNHCR and its partners fear they may not have adequate electricity, water and sanitation.

Eastern districts face a similar crisis. Thousands of displaced families in Muttur, Eachchilampattu Divisions of Trincomalee District, and Vaharai Division in Batticaloa District, are in desperate need of sustained humanitarian relief.

Some 15,000 to 20,000 people are now said to be displaced in LTTE-controlled Kilinochchi District as a result of repeated artillery shelling and air strikes. Humanitarian agencies are targeting their help to those displaced people – some 9,500 individuals – living outdoors or in communal buildings. Closely coordinating our response with other groups, UNHCR has distributed emergency relief items – kitchen utensils, pots and pans, towels, bed sheets, jerry cans, tarpaulins, mats, laundry soap and personal soap – to about 1,500 families, giving priority to the most vulnerable people. Unfortunately, we have limited stock and are not sure when new stock will arrive because of restrictions on road transport.

Around 500 families have reportedly moved to the grounds of Madhu Church in Mannar District, a previous displacement site during the 1983-2002 civil war. All permanent houses around the church are now fully occupied by displaced people, and nearly 75 families have erected tents in the surrounding area. We expect even more families to arrive in the coming days and will be working with our partners to address their immediate needs.

On a more positive note, we are pleased to report that we have gained limited access to Vaharai – an area of Batticaloa receiving many thousands of displaced people from neighbouring Trincomalee District. UNHCR and other agencies visited Vaharai on Thursday, 17 Aug., to assess needs so that we can ensure the effective distribution of relief to affected communities. We also assessed the distribution of relief items already delivered by convoy to the area last weekend.

Since fighting began to flare up in Sri

Lanka in April, we have recorded more than 162,200 people who have fled their homes but remain within the country, as well as 6,672 who have crossed the Palk Strait to become refugees in India's Tamil Nadu state.

EU and Co-Chairs urge immediate cessation of hostilities

August 17 – The European Union, expressing grave concern about the ongoing violence in Sri Lanka which seriously puts the Ceasefire Agreement and the peace process at risk, has repeated their earlier call for a cessation of hostilities in the ongoing fighting between government forces and the Tamil Tigers.

In a press release on 17 August, the EU said, "The Presidency of the European Union is gravely concerned about the ongoing violence in Sri Lanka which seriously puts the Ceasefire Agreement and the peace process at risk.

The Presidency urges the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to cease hostilities at once and to resume peace talks. The senseless violence will not resolve the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

The Presidency reiterates the full support of the European Union to the peace process and to the important work of the Norwegian facilitator. The personnel of the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission must be supported and their security guaranteed at all times. The Presidency is deeply concerned about the growing humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka and the suffering of innocent people. There are 130 000 refugees since April 7 in the conflict ridden areas, and the number is growing by day. The Presidency calls on both parties to guarantee free access for the relief agencies to the affected people.

In the light of the killing of the 17 aid workers in Muthur, the presidency expresses its concern about the working conditions of the NGOs in Sri Lanka, and calls on the government to support their valuable work.

Earlier, on August 12, the Co-Chairs of the Tokyo Donor Conference for Sri Lanka Peace Process, the United States, the European Union, Japan, and Norway, called on the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to cease hostilities immediately and return to the negotiation table. The statement called for independant, international investigations of serious human rights abuses, including the massacre of 17 Sri Lankan NGO workers of the French NGO Action Faim and the alleged killing of over 100 Muslims. "Both parties should take immediate action to allow relief agencies to assist victims from all three ethnic groups and to grant access to disputed areas."

The following is the full text of the press release issued on 12 August by the US Embassy in Colombo:

The Co-Chairs - the United States, the European Union, Japan, and Norway - are deeply concerned by the continued violence which is seriously unravelling the ceasefire agreement and peace process in Sri Lanka.

The Co-Chairs call on the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to cease hostilities immediately and return to the negotiation table. Both parties should make the utmost effort to prevent a further escalation of violence and loss of life. Violence is not the way to resolve the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. The suffering inflicted on innocent civilians is intolerable. The Co-Chairs remain fully committed to supporting the peace process and the valuable work of the Norwegian facilitator. The personnel of the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission in particular must be supported and their security guaranteed.

The Co-Chairs are seriously concerned about the growing humanitarian crisis. Several tens of thousands of people have already been forced to leave their homes in the Trincomalee district, adding to the already high number of internally displaced people in Sri Lanka. Both parties should take immediate action to allow relief agencies to assist victims from all three ethnic groups and to grant access to disputed areas. This is a matter of priority to avoid a humanitarian dis-

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aster.

We call for independent, international investigations of allegations of serious human rights abuses, including the murder of 17 Sri Lankans working for a French NGO and the alleged killing of 100 Muslims.

The Co-Chairs plan to meet soon to fully assess the situation and discuss appropriate actions.

More UN officials deplore violence in Sri Lanka

United Nations News Service, 15 Aug 2006 - Reacting to a bombing in Sri Lanka on Monday that reportedly killed dozens of children and wounded many more, two senior United Nations officials added their voices to growing international calls for the Government and separatist rebels to lay down their arms and resume talks.

Statements deploring the violence by the head of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the senior UN official dealing with children and armed conflict came one day after Secretary-General Kofi Annan raised the alarm about intensifying violence in Sri Lanka, including the weekend assassination of Ketheshwaran Loganathan, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Government Peace Secretariat and veteran Tamil human rights advocate.

UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman today called on both the Government and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to "respect international humanitarian law and ensure children and the places where they live, study and play are protected from harm."

According to press reports, as many as 40 adolescent girls were killed and some 100 children were wounded, many critically, when a compound in Vallipunam in the northern part of the country was bombed. Girls from various schools were staying overnight at the compound, attending a two-day course in first-aid.

UNICEF staff from a nearby office immediately visited the area to assess the situation and provide counselling services to those in need.

"The latest shocking developments in Sri Lanka show once again that children continue to bear the brunt of this conflict," said the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy, calling on the parties to cease hostilities and return to the negotiating table.

The LTTE continues to recruit children and use them in their fighting forces on the battlefield, she said in a statement released in New York.

Echoing Mr. Annan's remarks yesterday, Ms. Coomaraswamy voiced support for the Co-Chairs of the "Tokyo process" – the European Union, United States, Norway and Japan – and reminding the parties that there is no military solution to this conflict.

"They should work toward reinstating the peace process to protect their people, especially children, from further hardship," she said.

Meanwhile, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported today that continued heavy fighting in the north and east of Sri Lanka has sent several thousand more civilians fleeing their homes in search of safety.

UNHCR is having difficulty helping refugees in the area, because freedom of movement is heavily restricted in many areas, complicating the agency's efforts to deliver much-needed aid to civilians.

Since April, more than 128,800 people have been newly displaced within Sri Lanka, including more than 50,000 who fled since the flare-up of violence in Muttur and its surrounding areas in Trincomalee District in early August. A further 6,600 Sri Lankans have fled across the border to Tamil Nadu in India since the beginning of the year.

UN agencies are preparing an assessment mission to Jaffna, where thousands of trapped families are unable to move freely. "Our offices are ready to distribute emergency packs, additional water jerry cans, water bladders and lanterns if required," UNHCR spokesperson Jennifer Pagonis told a press briefing in Geneva.

Many of the people who could get out of Jaffna District have begun making their way south to Killinochchi District, an area controlled by the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), where the displaced are being assisted in schools and other communal centres, she said.

UNHCR and other partners have worked closely with the military and local authorities to secure safe passage to the LTTE-controlled area of Vaharai Division, allowing truckloads of food, medicine and other supplies to reach civilians affected by the fighting.

But access to Muttur and Eachchilampattu in Trincomalee District is still blocked, Ms. Pagonis said. "We and our partners are deeply concerned about the well-being of those still trapped in these areas, estimated to number around 15,000."

Probe into killing of 17 aid workers

August 12 - As the fighting between government forces and Tamil Tigers subsided in the eastern town of Muttur, the bodies of 17 aid workers working for a foreign NGO who were brutally murdered on 5 August were discovered on the following day.. The aid workers were attached to the French-based Action Contre la Faim (Action Against Hunger) or AAH, which has worked in Sri Lanka since 1996. In the Muttur area in eastern Sri Lanka, AAH was involved in supplying clean water and promoting economic activity to assist victims of the 2004 tsunami.

A fact-finding mission by the Consortium of Humanitarian Agency that reached Muttur on 6 August found 15 of the bodies outside the AAH office. "The bodies were all face downwards on the front lawn, seemingly lined up and shot at very close range. The sight was too much to handle", a representative stated. The bodies of the other two were recovered from a car, suggesting they were killed while trying to flee.

Action Against Hunger Mission Chief Erik Forte told the press the bodies of 15 of his employees were found shot dead in Mutur on Sunday. "We lost contact with them on Friday morning. On Saturday there were reports that 15 bodies were found in a government area of Mutur where there was fierce fighting between the LTTE and the security forces. On Sunday the Centre for Humanitarian Agencies saw the bodies and confirmed that they were our staff members," Mr. Forte said.

AAH officials arrived in Muttur on 7 August and identified the dead as their staff. A press statement the following day declared: "Now that it is clear this was a mass murder targeting clearly identified humanitarian workers, AAH is determined not to settle for vague answers from the parties to the conflict...and will demand exemplary punishment". The workers had all been wearing AAH t-shirts and the Muttur office was identified with signs and flags. The aid workers, one Muslim and the rest all Tamils and included 11 males and 4 females, were in Mutur to provide humanitarian assistance to the families displaced by the intense fighting between the government forces and the LTTE in the area.

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As usual the LTTE and the army traded charges as to who is responsible for the killing but there was no way to verify who the real perpetrators were as it happened at the time the LTTE and army were fighting in the area. However the relatives of victims have blamed the security forces.

The international community has been outraged by the massacre and many including the United States and the United Nations, have demanded a transparent and independent investigation into one of the worst massacres of aid workers.

The UN has demanded a full and independent inquiry into the murders of the 17 international aid agency workers It says the inquiry into their murder should find out how unarmed, humanitarian workers could be executed. The UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Egeland, said that the Paris-based AAH aid agency "did fantastic work to help tsunami victims in Sri Lanka"..

Three UN human rights experts urged the Sri Lankan government to publish the findings of an independent investigation into the recent killing of 17 aid workers. The deliberate targeting of the Sri Lankans working for the French charity Action Against Hunger (Action Contre la Faim - ACF) in the northeast of the country was a "serious violation" of human rights and humanitarian law, they added in statement released by the United Nations.

The charity workers were found dead with gunshot injuries on Sunday (6) in their office in Mutur, where heavy fighting had pitted Sri Lankan troops against Tamil Tigers.

The statement was signed by the Special Representative on human rights defenders, Hina Jilani, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, Philip Alston, and the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Jean Ziegler.

Saying that, "We are shocked and alarmed by the recent escalation of violence in Sri Lanka," they welcomed a government pledge to hold an independent investigation, saying it was "vital not only to bring the perpetrators to justice, but to restore confidence to humanitarian workers and the populations they serve". "We also urge the government to render the findings of its investigation public as soon as it is completed," the UN experts said adding, "An investigation, however independent, impartial and professional, whose results remain covered by secrecy is of little use."

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka has assigned two investigators to probe the death of 17 aid workers in Muttur in the Trincomalee District.

The Commission's Media Officer Mahinda Hattaka told journalsits that the two investigators from the Head Office were being assisted by two co-ordinating officers from Anuradhapura and Trincomalee. They were in the process on interviewing relatives and friends of the 17 killed, he said.

"On their return to Colombo on Friday (August 11) they will submit a report to the Human Rights Chairman and former Supreme Court Chairman P. Ramanathan," said Hattaka.

However, he added that they had not received any information after the team had visited Muttur. "Both Army and the LTTE should allow NGOs to work without hindrance. We are taking this very seriously," he said.

Meanwhile, on Monday Benita

Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy and Co-Chair of the Tokyo Donor Conference for Sri Lanka, and Louis Michel, Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, in a joint statement on behalf of the European Commission said:

"We are deeply shocked by the spate of violent attacks on civilians and humanitarian aid personnel in Sri Lanka culminating in the execution-style killing of 15 aid workers from the NGO Action Contre La Faim in Mutthur."

The Commission urged the authorities in Sri Lanka to investigate those killings immediately and thoroughly and to give assurances that they would do everything possible to ensure a safe humanitarian environment in the country.

"Violence is not the way to resolve the problems in Sri Lanka. The Commission reiterates once more the call to the parties to put an end to violence and to return to the negotiation table so as to relieve the Sri Lankan people from the ordeal of twenty years of persistent conflict," he said.

It is learnt that Australia is providing forensic expertise to help in the special investigation called by President Mahinda Rajapaksa into the killing of the aid workers.

Five forensic experts from Australia are already in Sri Lanka to assist the investigation into the massacre of the 17 aid workers and they together with the Australian High Commissioner participated at a meeting on Friday (11) at the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights chaired by Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe..

The IGP, DIG (CID), Director CID, Deputy Solicitor General, the Foreign Ministry, the Colombo JMO and the Anuradhapura JMO who conducted the post-mortem examination, Additional Secretary to the Health Ministry, Prof. Ravindra Fernando and Professor of Forensic Medicine at the Colombo Medical College, also attended this meeting during the latter part of which the head of the ACF mission in the country also sat in.

ACF was requested to facilitate agreement from the families of the victims to permit exhumation of the bodies for further forensic tests. A CID team is already in Trincomalee for the purpose of recording statements of consent, the minister said. A court order is needed to exhume any dead body.

Asked if the government was agreeable to a suggestion by Mr. Desmond Fernando, P.C. Chairman of the Sri Lanka National Commission of Jurists, that assistance from Britain also be sought, Samarasinghe said that he had contacted the Acting British High Commissioner and discussed possible Scotland Yard input. "The British, however, were keener on training local investigators rather than participating in any investigation here," he said. "It is now up to the CID to do the investigation," Samarasinghe said. "It must, of course, be conducted within the framework of the country's laws"

At a Colombo news conference on the same day, ACF's Executive Director Benoit Miribel, asked for an opinion on who was responsible for the atrocity declared "I don't know who is responsible. We will take all steps necessary to get to the bottom of this tragedy," he said. Miribel admitted that the investigation will take time and said that the government is in charge of the investigation and was taking it very seriously

"ACF was in contact with the UN and ICRC about this matter which will be closely followed by both the EU and the UN. They would make monthly statements as the investigation proceeds," he said.

Peace March and Anti-War Rally in Colombo

August 18 - The National Anti-War Front (NAWF) organized and held a successful and well attended anti-war peace rally on Thursday (17) at the Viharamahadevi Park in Colombo despite an ineffective and unsuccessful attempt by group of persons including a few Buddhist monks belonging to the JHU to disrupt it. Reports say that the attempt led to fisticuffs and exchange of blows eventually resulting in the disrupters being chased away. They were later escorted out of the park under police protection.

The clash began when a group of monks who represented the JHU attempted to get on to the stage of the NAWF meeting and disrupted it.

A large number of politicians from the PA, UNP, SLMC, CWC and other political parties, members of civil society, NGO representatives, trade union activists and artistes were on the stage at the time the incident started.

Interrupting Deputy Minister Mervyn Silva who was speaking at that time, JSS Secretary Ven Thera, leading the group of monks exhibited banners asking the organizers of the rally to proceed to Killinochchi to preach peace. At this stage Mr. Silva pulled the banners and threw them away. Fisticuffs then broke out and the JHU members were pushed out of the stage. Later the banners brought by them were burnt and the rally continued.

The rally which was attended by more than 1500 participants was preceded by a demonstration march from Colombo's Hyde Park. The participants carried banners and placards depicting anti-war and pro-peace slogans. Several speakers addressed the rally. Ven. Prof. Kumburugamuwe Vajira Thera, Ven. Maduluwawe Sobitha Nayake Thera, Ven. Kali Kanagaratnam Kurukkal, Maulavi H. Abdul Nazar and Rt. Rev. Bishop Kumar Illangasinghe presided over the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, UNP parliamentarian Rajitha Senaratne said two main parties UNP and PA had to unite to bring peace to the country. He stated extremists groups from both Sinhala and Tamil communities were leading the country to war and these movements had to be brought into the peace process.

Western People's Front leader Parliamentarian Mano Ganesan said Tamil people living in the South are caught between the Northern extremism and the Southern Sinhala Buddhist fundamentalists. He said they had sent a message today to the Government and the LTTE that war is not the solution to the ethnic issue.

Democratic Left Front leader Vasudeva Nanayakkara said similar groups who attempted to disrupt the peace rally were there throughout history. He said the agents of war and the arms dealers who promote war had encouraged these monks to protest against peace.

Deputy Minister Dilan Perera said anti-war front comprises groups of different ideologies. Yet they have come together because they are against the war and believed the ethnic problem can be solved only by a federal arrangement.

Earlier in the week, a mass movement to express the sentiments of a majority of Sri Lankans that they are against war and for a peaceful solution based on power sharing was launched by the National Anti-War Front (NAWF).

The basic document of the NAWF called for an end to the hostilities and the commencement of talks between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE. "We

demand that all parties honour the Ceasefire Agreement. We demand that the LTTE refrain from all acts of violence." "We urge the Government of Sri Lanka to refrain from violence and not to encourage a culture of impunity," it said.

The NAWF recalled that President Mahinda Rajapaksa had promised in his election campaign that he wanted to take the road to peace and was ready to meet the LTTE chief, Prabhakaran, face to face, to resolve all the issues. "We urge the President and the Leader of the LTTE to talk to each other in resolving issues. We urge this to take place soon, when everything else seems to have failed," the NAWF document said. "We also urge the LTTE to transform itself into a political party and get involved in the political process," it said.

The NAWF wanted the LTTE to commit itself to a solution within a united Sri Lanka where both sides could achieve a "win-win" situation. "We urge the LTTE to make a statement assuring the minorities and other political entities full representation and democracy in the North and East," it said.

Chairman NAWF, Dr. Kumar Rupasinghe said that while those who were for peace restricted their activities to seminars and workshops held indoors while a few war mongers screamed themselves hoarse at meetings held in different parts of the country. "As a result, only the voices of the war mongers were heard."

However, the National Anti War Front has built a platform and all political parties, trade unions, professionals, NGO's and various civil society movements have committed themselves to lead the people's protest against war and violence, he told a news conference.

The United National Party representative, Dr. Rajitha Senaratne said that people representing every political party are together to lead protest against war and violence. "Even though we have widely divergent views, all of us agree that the war must stop immediately and a negotiated solution must be arrived at on the basis of sharing of power, whatever that model is."

SLFP parliamentarian Dilan Perera said that whatever differences exist, "we are agreeable on the need to stop the war and look towards a negotiated settlement on the basis of shared power." "We will motivate the people to express their sentiments of protest against war and violence," he said.

Democratic Left Front leader Vasudeva Nanayakkara said that the whole country was facing a problem due to the war mongering by the JVP and the JHU. "It is time that we offer to lead against such movements who are for war."

TNA parliamentarian N. Raviraj assured that they will call on both the government and the LTTE to halt the war and stop the destruction that the country is heading to.

The representative of the Western People's Front Mano Ganesan and several other speakers expressed the same sentiments that they are against war and for a negotiated solution based on the sharing of power.

It was announced that following the inaugural NAWF rally on 17 August in Colombo, twelve further rallies would be held at different parts of the country leading to the final mass meeting in Colombo on September 21. It is expected that both President Mahinda Rajapaksha and leader of the opposition Ranil Wickremesinghe would address the final rally.

Speaking to the media after the rally, Dr. Kumara Kumarasinghe said that he regretted the violent incidents at a peace event. The crowd, he admitted, had turned angry and roughed up some of the intruders. He said he didn't see what really happened because of the pandemonium and failed to identify the attackers. He blamed the JHU for having triggered "that unfortunate incident". He said there had been a peace march in Kandy recently and the same group had disrupted it. He said about ten monks had forced themselves on to the stage and displayed a banner which ran counter to the theme of the rally.

Child killed in assassination bid on EPDP deputy

August 9 - Three persons were killed and eight others including former EPDP Parliamentarian S. Sivadasan injured when a powerful bomb ripped through the vehicle transporting the ex-MP at Bamblapitiya in Colombo on 8 August.

The bomb, suspected to have been attached to the underside the vehicle, went off near St. Paul's Girls School, Milagiriya around 1.00 pm as it was being driven along Dickmans Road.

Among the dead was a three-year-old child who was on the side of the road at the time of the incident and an official from the Ministerial Security Division, sources at the scene said. There were also two bodies trapped inside the vehicle that was enveloped in flames.

Among the injured are W.A. Fernando, Sasida Rasiah, K.J. Chandrasiri, Ranjani Kalahari, Shamika Kavindi, Wijesena, K. Sureshan.

National Hospital sources said four women and four men were admitted to the Hospital and except for one woman, later identified as the mother of the little girl who was killed in the incident, all others were out of danger.

Sankarapillai Sivadasan, who is virtual deputy to the EPDP leader Douglas Devananda and is also the Chairman of the Palmyra Development Board, was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit together with the woman in critical condition. Sivathasan was a member of Communist party before he joint the EPDP.

Sivadasan, 67, had left his office at Dickman's Road and was on his way to his home in Madiwela when the explosion occurred.

The police believe that the bomb which was fixed to the underside of the vehicle with a magnetic device was triggered off by suspected assailants belonging to the LTTE which has been regularly targeting EPDP members including its leader who has escaped several bids on his life.

Sivathasan was a long standing member of the EPDP and had received several threats from the LTTE, according to an EPDP spokesman. Drawing attention to the latest killing of another senior member of the EPDP Maha Kanpathipillai on July 25, he said that the Tamil Tigers were carrying on relentless campaign of targeting and killing EPDP members. More than 56 EPDP members have been assassinated by the LTTE since the CFA was signed and many of our members have been abducted, he added. Mr. Sivadasan, who returned to Colombo on the previous day after visiting Pesalai, was on his way to meet Minister Douglas Devananda, who resides in a by-lane close to the scene of the blast.

The three-year-old child killed on the spot was walking past the van at the time of the blast accompanied by her mother who was returning home after working as a domestic at a house nearby. The woman, John Rasiah Sasida, works as a domestic at the Bambalapitiya flats and was going to the bus stand with her daughter Ashwini Jegatheeswaran to return to her home in Kirulapona when the blast occurred

According to the police, the vehicle in which Sivathasan traveled on the day

had been subjected to a thorough check between 11 am and 12 noon at the premises of the Social Service Ministry, but no suspicious objects were found. However, a couple of hours later it was blasted by a bomb placed on its underside. Investigators believe that when the van was parked in the premises of the Palmyrah Development Board, after leaving the premises of the Social Services Ministry, someone could have fixed the bomb sith a magnetic device. Police firmly believe that it was at this place that the bomb has been placed because it did not stop anywhere else on its journey down Dickmans Road

Police seize weapons haul

Aug 19 - On information provided by civilians, Wattala police on Sunday (13) afternoon recovered eight claymore mines and other items hidden in a secret compartment of a lorry parked near the Mosque at Mabola, Wattala, 10 miles from Colombo.

According to a woman of the area she had noticed an unattended lorry parked near her house for three days and complained to Wattala police. Police had visited the scene but found nothing suspicious. When the woman complained to police for the second time they were able to arrest the two suspects who had claimed they were the driver and the cleaner of the vehicle.

Reportedly, the Inspector General of Police Chandra Fernando was also present when the lorry was checked. He said all the credit of the discovery should be given to those vigilant civilians who timely informed the police on the suspects.

Senior police officials said that the recovery pre-empted a series of high profile attacks on key political and military targets in the city and its suburbs.

One suspect took cyanide and died before police rushed him to Ragama hospital. The other admitted his involvement with the LTTE.

Police found eight claymore mines, a GPS machine (Global Position System), 15 hand grenades, three T-56 assault rifles, three T-56 magazines, one micro pistol, 10 detonators, three claymore boosters, eight tripods for claymore mines, a sniper gun, a 9mm automatic pistol, two 9mm magazines, 240 rounds of pistol ammunition, 175 rounds of T-56 ammunition, one remote control device, one communication set with antenna, 15 metres of code wire, two cyanide capsules, and nine batteries. After searching the lorry with the assistance of the Bomb Disposal Unit, Police found a cache of explosives laden in a false bottom of the lorry.

The seizure of the lethal weapons followed the arrest of two suspicious persons who were loitering in the vicinity of the Wattala Police station, the police said. While being interrogated by the Police, one suspect identified as Rajasinghe Kuhan, a 23 year old youth from Jaffna killed himself after swallowing a cyanide capsule, Police said.

The other suspect Thevarasa Sivapalan a resident from Kokuvil, Jaffna revealed under police interrogation that the duo had come with 10 others in the explosive packed lorry from LTTE controlled northern Sri Lanka and that it was parked near an Ice factory in Mabole, in Wattla. He was also admitted to the Ragama teaching hospital after Police found that he too had taken a cyanide capsule while accompanying the Police officers to the place where they had parked the lorry.

A suspect believed to be a senior LTTE cadre who was to receive the large quantity of weapons and explosives recovered at Wattala was arrested on 18 August, according to police sources. A special police team from Peliyagoda arrested the suspect while he was reportedly hiding in a house at Templars Road in Mt. Lavinia. The suspect had come to the city sometime ago and was maintaining a low profile while gathering information and planning attacks on VIPs. According police sources one of the two suspects arrested in Wattala identified as Kugan, who committed suicide by consuming a cyanide capsule, was to deliver the lorry load of claymore mines and other weapons to the arrested cadre.

It was earlier reported that the Karandeniya police in the south of the island on August 4, seized a lorry carrying a large haul of weapons and explosives that included 26 Claymore mines each weighing five kgs, two side chargers, two detonator wire codes, three T56, 13 magazines, one pistol, 240 nine ml ammunition and high explosive C4 30 packets each weighing 500g, 200 detonators and 1,000 ammunition, the sources added.

Investigations were conducted following the Karandeniya police intelligence officer being tipped-off about LTTE terrorists preparing to transport weapons to the South. "We were informed two days ago that the LTTE was planning to transport weapons from Dambulla to Elpitiya. Karandeniya policemen blocked the lorry passing the Bentota Bridge and arrested the suspects and the lorry with the haul," the police said. The two suspects had come from Kilinochchi to Dambulla and were transporting the weapons in the canter lorry which was on its way to the Divithura Plantation in Elpitiya.

A storage house had been set-up to keep the weapons, police said. The lorry with registration number 42 Sri 1281 had a secret compartment built into its floor where the weapons and explosives were

(continued on next page)

Dance Teacher Required

TECA (Tamil Educational and Cultural Association-London) runs Fine arts classes for Asian Children in Croydon and other surrounding areas. TECA is looking for an experienced Bharatha Natyam dance teacher. The position will be on contract basis initially for 2 years. Working hours 35 hrs per week (Weekends and 4 other days) Selection will be based on the following requirements:

Have offered Bharathanatyam as a main subject in a recognised university or equivalent, Master's degree preferred but not essential. Have at least 3 years teaching experience. Able to prepare students up to Diploma Grade and should be able to prepare students for their Arangatem. Able to conduct workshops for experienced students and Junior teachers. Good knowledge in Folk Dance and Kavadiyattam. Dance Style should be compatible with KalaiKaviri / Kalachethra Style. Able to speak and communicate in Tamil Language and in English.

Salary between (£10,000-£15000) depending on qualification and experience. Closing Date: 08/09/2006. Please apply to the following email address enclosing your CV by email or by post.

email: info@tamiled.co.uk

Address:
The Hon. Secretary TECA
72, Warlingham Road
Thornton Heath, Surrey
CR7 7DE UK

Bombing raid kills 55 and injures over 120

August 14 - At least 51 adolescent schoolgirls aged between 17 to 20 were killed and 129 were wounded when Sri Lankan Kfir jets bombed a building in a compound in Mullaithivu district on Monday (14) morning where the girls were attending a residential course on first aid, TamilNet reported. Ambulances rushed the wounded, many of whom were bleeding badly, to local hospitals, the report said. Officials of the LTTE's Peace Secretariat, briefing reporters in Kilinochchi, described the attack as "a horrible act of terror" by the Sri Lankan armed forces.

Four Kfir jet bombers of the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) dropped 16 bombs on the premises of the 'Sencholai' in Vallipunam on Paranthan-Mullaithivu road, according to LTTE sources.

"Girls from various schools in the Mullaitivu district were staying overnight at the compound, attending a course in first-aid, LTTE officials in Kilinochchi said. The officials at the LTTE Peace Secretariat denounced the Sri Lankan airstrike as 'a horrible act of terror.' They condemned the 'deliberate, cold-blooded and inhumane' targeting of the schoolgirls compound by the daylight air raid," TamilNet reported.

TamilNet also reported that the 'Sencholai' compound was established eight years ago and was well known to international agencies and that many UN seminars, including those conducted by UNICEF had been held there. It said that, "The Sencholai building has been for the past 8 years used to house girls who had lost one or more parents. Several other institutions providing humanitarian services are located close to Sencholai."

There have been some confusion when some initial reports suggested that the victims of the bombing raid by the SLAF were orphaned small children resident and cared for at Sencholai.

However, the Director of Tamil-eelam Educational Board, V. Ilankumaran, in an interview to TamilNet Monday (14) said that the girls killed and injured in Monday's Kfir attack were participants in a 10-day residential on "Leadership, Self-Awareness and First Aid workshop." More than 400 G.C.E. A/L students from 18 different schools in Kilinochchi, Mullaithivu, and Oddusuddan Educational Zones, and selected girls from other educational organisations took part in the annual programme, Mr. Ilankumaran said. According to the timetable of the course, 7:00 a.m. on Monday, the time the air-strike took place, was the time of morning-assembly, he said.

The parliamentary group of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) condemned Sri Lankan government's attack as "not merely atrocious and inhuman - it clearly has a genocidal intent...The heavy aerial bombardment on the premises clearly indicates that the attack was premeditated, deliberate and vicious," and appealed to the International Community "to take the earliest possible action to stop the Sri Lankan State from proceeding with its genocidal program," in an urgent press release issued in Colombo on Monday (14).

The incident prompted calls from the United Nations for both sides to protect children from harm and to end their hostilities immediately. UN's child agency, UNICEF, and international truce monitors have visited the scene of the carnage.

The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), whose team visited the affected compound in Vallipunam on the Paranthan-Mullaithivu road in Mullaittivu, confirmed that several students had died in an attack. They said they saw the bodies of 19 young men and women aged around 17 to 20 who had been killed in two locations following the aerial bombardments. The monitors said that the site was clearly a civilian location but at the same time the geography of the area was such that it was ideal to conduct arms training so the monitors were unable to clearly state if the location was purely a school or rebel training facility.

In a statement issued on 15 Au-

(continued from page 10)

hidden, OIC Karandeniya Police IP Padma Jayadeva said.

The suspects were from Jaffna and Kilinochchi and had heavy duty licence. Police believe that the arms were to be used in the south. The lorry stolen from a businessman in Karandeniya had been sold to the suspects. On questioning, the suspects had told the police that the explosives and the weapons were to be hidden in a house at the Divithura Plantation, on orders given by the LTTE and later transported to places that would be indicated to them in the next few days, police said. Information elicited from the suspects had also revealed that the explosive were to be used in an assassination attempt on President Mahinda Rajapakse, who was due to participate at a function in the Galle district within the next few days.

Police said they were surprised how the lorry carrying such a large stock of explosives and weapons was able to come as far as Galle District, all the way from Kilinochchi, passing through so many barriers.

In another incident of weapons find in the north, on 11 August, it was reported that the army thwarted an LTTE attempt to smuggle a large quantity of arms and explosives into Jaffna, at the Muhamalai checkpoint. They had been concealed in the roof of a private bus that travelled between Muhamalai and Jaffna. The army seized four T-56 assault rifles with 425 rounds of ammunition and 15 magazines, one pistol with 24 rounds of ammunition and three magazines, 4 anti personnel mines, 10 hand grenades, 30 detonators, two remote control devices used to detonate claymore mines with a 30-metre-long wire, 8 pouches used in suicide jackets, one communication equipment and 12 pen torch batteries.

The driver and the conductor were arrested together with the vehicle, the army said. They had been handed over to the Muhamalai police post. ❑

gust, UNICEF said the "bombing on Monday of a Vallepuram compound in Mullaitivu district that reportedly killed dozens of girls and wounded many more is a shocking result of the rising violence in Sri Lanka.

"These children are innocent victims of violence," said Ann M. Veneman, UNICEF Executive Director. "We call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law and ensure children and the places where they live, study and play are protected from harm."

UNICEF staff from a nearby office immediately visited the compound to assess the situation and to provide fuel and supplies for the hospital as well as counselling support for the injured students and the bereaved families.

This latest incident came amidst escalating hostilities in Sri Lanka in recent weeks, where tens of thousands of children were displaced from their homes. Hundreds of children have been injured, lost family members, and live in constant fear of the violence and continuous shelling of their communities, UNICEF said.

The government on Monday (14) rejected Tamil Tiger claims that schoolgirls were the victims of an air force strike earlier in the day, saying the strike targeted a training camp for child soldiers "that had been identified by air force surveillance.". The Defense Ministry said in a statement that a training base of the LTTE in Mullaitivu district had been bombed and "50 to 60 young LTTE terrorist cadres" were killed and many were injured. It said the victims were clearly not attending a first aid class as claimed by the Tigers noting that it would be "highly unusual" for schoolgirls to attend a first-aid class at 7 a.m. as claimed by LTTE media. The government published pictures of girls in school uniforms receiving arms training and teenage women LTTE soldiers in camouflage uniforms on its website.

But Air Force spokesman Group Capt. Ajantha Silva said, "we have proof that this place is an LTTE base." Areas targeted by the air force are "pre-identified" and confirmed by the intelligence services, the Defense Ministry said in its statement.

According to details subsequently released via the TamilNet, among the dead in the bombing raid are 51 girls between the ages of 17 and 20 preparing for the GCE (A/L) hailing from several schools in the Wanni region, and 4 who members of the staff.

Udaiyaarkattu	
Maha Vidyalayam	-11;
Viswamadhu MV	-09;
Mullaitheevu MV	-08;
Kumulamunai MV	-05;
Semmalai MV	-04;
Vithiyananda College	-04;
Puthukkudiyiruppu	
Maha Vidyalayam	-03;
Tharmapuram MV	-03;
Muruganantha MV	-02;
Oddusuddan MV	-01;
Pirammathanaaru MV	-01.

One commentator said, "What is shocking is that, while the Government and the Tigers were trading charges between themselves, the feelings or voices of the parents of these unfortunate girls who lost their young lives in this tragic incident have not been heard at all. They seem to have been deliberately kept out of the limelight." ❑

Pakistan Envoy narrowly escapes in bomb attack

August 15 - The Pakistani High Commissioner, Basir Wali Mohamand. narrowly survived an assassination bid in a bomb attack by suspected Tamil Tigers on his motorcade on Monday (14) in the heart of Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo.

Two claymore mines reportedly placed by suspected Tamil Tiger assailants in a trishaw, parked by side the side of Green Path, about one hundred metres from the Liberty Plaza roundabout in Colpetty, exploded simultaneously as the High Commissioner's motorcade passed by. The initial news reports that it was a suicide operation have not been confirmed.

Though the Pakistani top diplomat's vehicle was damaged, he was unhurt although his car took shrapnel from the exploding mine mounted on a parked three-wheeler taxi, police said.

The High Commissioner was on his way to a function after the Pakistan Independence Day celebrations when the attack occurred.

The explosive laden trishaw (three-wheeler) had been parked with its rear facing the main road to direct the full blast towards the motorcade. The shrapnel had travelled a long distance and the blasts had set seven vehicles ablaze, the police said. The Ceylon Pentecostal Mission building, opposite which the incident occurred, was also damaged.

"One security vehicle took the full impact of the blast," said the Special Task Force Commandant DIG Nimal Lewke.

Four army commandos, who travelled in the ill-fated Defender vehicle, were killed together with three civilians who were near the scene. A total of 16 were rushed to the National Hospital accident service after the explosion. Accident Service Director Dr. Anil Jayasinghe said an employee of the Ceylon Gem Corporation, Sarath Dayananda who was rushed with critical injuries to his bowels under went surgery and another army soldier Nirosh Bandara was in the Neurosurgical ICU. "Among the critically injured are a nine year old boy from Panchikawatte, Colombo. He was brought with severe head injuries and is now under close medical observation," Dr. Jayasinghe said.

The government in Colombo and its police accused the Tamil Tigers for the attack on the Pakistani Ambassador and his convoy and ordered a high level probe into the incident in the immediate aftermath of the incident and condemned 'the attempted assassination of the High Commissioner.'

However, why the LTTE could have targeted the High Commissioner's motorcade was not clear. Pakistan

is a key supplier of weapons to the Sri Lankan armed forces and has also shared intelligence with the authorities in their battle against the Tigers.

In reporting the incident, LTTE's website, TamilNet specifically noted that the Pakistani High Commissioner, Col (retd) Bashir Wali Mohammed, was a former director of the Pakistani Intelligence Bureau, and that he had earlier served as head of Intelligence operations in the Pakistani High Commission in Colombo during the 1990s.

The unprecedented Claymore mine attack on a diplomat in Colombo came as government forces and Tamil Tigers were locked in fierce military confrontations in the island's northern peninsula of Jaffna and in the east. It was the first time in 21 years that a civilian foreigner had been targeted in Sri Lanka's three-decades-old separatist campaign since the kidnapping of an American couple in 1985 by Tamil militants.

Recalling the incident, the High Commissioner said he was travelling to keep an appointment after taking part in the flag hoisting ceremony of the Independent Day celebrations at the High Commission when the explosion took place. "When we were passing Kollupitiya at around 1.05 pm we heard an explosion with a flash of light. My security back up which must have seen it coming and covered my vehicle. But four of them died due to the blast."

The Sri Lanka Government unequivocally condemned the attempted assassination of the Pakistani High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Bashir Wali Mohmand. President Mahinda Rajapaksa personally telephoned Pakistan High Commissioner Bashir Wali Mohmand to express the deep shock over the assassination attempt by the LTTE, a government press release said.

Strongly condemning the attempt to assassinate Pakistan's High Commissioner the Government expressed grave concerned over the LTTE's decision to widen its terror acts to include threats to regional allies. In a statement the Government said the High Commissioner narrowly escaped when the explosives-laden three-wheeler was prevented from reaching its target by the military escort vehicle. It said the military vehicle took the full brunt of the explosion and the Government deeply appreciated the valour demonstrated by the soldiers in making the supreme sacrifice while carrying out the duties of protecting the life of a respected foreign dignitary.

"The Government unequivocally condemns this attack on the envoy of a friendly country," the statement said. "The Tigers' desperate bid to target the Pakistan High Commissioner is a clear indication that it is upset following the Pakistan Government's offer of military aid and other assistance to counter Tiger terrorism as well as to divert attention from the reversals suffered by the Tigers in the North," the Media Centre for National Security said.

India condemned the bomb attack in Colombo targeting Pakistan's top envoy. "The government of India has all along strongly condemned all incidents of terrorist violence and this incident is no exception," Indian foreign ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna told reporters here. "We deplore the targeting of a diplomatic convoy by terrorist elements and we hope such ... attacks will not be repeated," Sarna added

In Islamabad, the Government of Pakistan has strongly condemned the attempt on its High Commissioner on the 60th Independence Day of Pakistan: "We strongly condemn the attack and regret the loss of the seven lives," Foreign Ministry spokesman Tasnim Aslam said adding, "The attack was on our High Commissioner who is safe but his car is damaged."

Despite the attempt on his life, Pakistan High Commissioner in Sri Lanka Bashir Wali Mohmand reiterated that Pakistan would continue to stand for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka.

"Our policies are always based on principles. We will not condone any terrorism. We believe in the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and will continue to do so," the High Commissioner who narrowly escaped a bomb explosion targeting him in Kollupitiya yesterday told the Daily News. The High Commissioner's vehicle and security escort were also damaged in the explosion which took place when he was travelling with his wife.

He said that Pakistan was also facing the same problem of terrorism and his country always stood for Sri Lanka's territorial integrity.

Asked whether Pakistan's strong stand for an undivided Sri Lanka was the reason for the failed attempt on his life, Mohmand said it could be. "It is too early to jump to any conclusions. The phenomenon of suicide bombings is part of the whole game. Let us know who the culprit is after the Government investigates the incident. But I would like to reiterate that Pakistan will continue to stand for Sri Lanka's territorial integrity," he said.

Fifteen years after the Rajiv Gandhi assassination, the LTTE way of avenging the Indian military support to Sri Lanka, the Tigers appear to be back on the old track of intimidating Sri Lanka's neighbours who support the war against terrorism here. The attempt on the life of Pakistan High Commissioner on Pakistan's Independence Day and at a time when two weapon shipments were at the Colombo Port, conveys a strong message.

Anybody who helps Sri Lanka militarily during this crucial phase of the conflict, is a likely target, notwithstanding the ripples that such attacks would create internationally!

The Indian Express newspaper broke the story in early May that Sri Lanka has placed an order with Pakistan for comprehensive list of weapons and hardware. The list, according to the Indian Express among others included UAVs, cluster bombs, PGMs (Precision Guided Munitions), deep penetration bombs and rockets.

Sri Lanka had turned to Pakistan following an unsuccessful attempt by Colombo to get India to make the supplies along with some other weapons and hardware including multi-barrel rocket launcher systems, mortars, sea mines, small fast attack crafts and ground radars.

The attempt on the life of Pakistan High Commissioner reflects the LTTE's anger about the flow of military supplies to Sri Lanka. Surely the Tigers were fully aware of the international ramifications of such an attack.

Pakistan along with China had been the two major suppliers of weapons to Colombo in its two decade old war against the LTTE. Besides, Pakistan has also been offering regular training facilities to Sri Lankan security forces since the days of General Zia Ul Haque.Even by now, 200 Sri Lankan soldiers are being trained in Pakistan at different military institutions. ❑

Maavil Aru, Muthur and Massacres Bishop's Message to the Nation

The following is the text of a Message to the Nation from the Rt Revd Duleep de Chickera, Bishop of Colombo issued on 14 August 2006:

The recent Maavi Aru/Muthur confrontations have caused death and dislocation amongst all communities. It is deeply regrettable that, as always, innocent civilians have, in addition to the combatants, been killed in the reportedly fierce and desperate close proximity fighting between the Armed Forces and the LTTE.

The Muslims undoubtedly suffered the most. Over 30,000 have been displaced from Muttur and are huddled together in hopelessly inadequate makeshift shelters in and around Kantale. The killing of several Muslim young men near the 64th mile post on the Muthur -Kantale road has added to the misery of this community.

The Tamils have fled to either Trincomalee or behind LTTE lines where they feel relatively safer amongst their own. The reported manner in which the seventeen Tamil men and women aid workers were killed suggests calculated murder. One of these young men was the brother of one of the five students murdered in Trincomalee in June this year.

The Sinhalese in Serunuwara and the surrounding settlements live in fear of the unpredictable, and congregate in schools for the night. An elderly and dignified woman whose son had been killed, preferred a similar death to a slow death without water.

The LTTE is undoubtedly responsible for the utterly senseless killing of Ketheesh Loganathan, a relentless advocate of a peaceful solution to the ethnic question. This has shocked the Nation and must be condemned unreservedly. He gave his life for the values of peace and justice and will be remembered for this.

The attempt on the life of Sivathasan of the EPDP at Dickman's Road that killed, among others, a three year old girl and critically wounded her mother pierced the hearts of many.

Condemnation and Collective Moral conscience

All these killings must be condemned by all civic minded democratic people. There must be an end to such brutal violations of life and the mental agony that parents, families and communities suffer.

And yet the condemnation of such atrocities and calling for speedy and professional investigations is fast becoming futile. The appointment of committees to investigate these atrocities seem a waste of time and an affront to those murdered. Our society has signaled to those who carry arms that they can use them against unarmed civilians and get away with it. The GoSL is hopelessly losing its ability to protect its citizens or to ensure justice when atrocities are committed. If this trend continues it will lose its moral credibility to govern this country.

As a Sri Lankan society, our inability to signal seriousness when the sacred lives of our own citizens are annihilated is an indictment on our collective integrity too.

This desperately worsening trend suggests that the people this country will soon have nowhere to turn for protection and justice. With every atrocity more fear is spread and the people become more vulnerable. The days ahead are bleak and it is now mostly the collective conscience and moral resources of the people that can save us from chaos and ruin. With this in mind I call upon all responsible Civil and Religious Leaders to cross political and cultural barriers and help build an alternate culture of moral resistance and justice. To see and not perceive is perhaps the greatest sin of a leadership and a people.

Continuing Crisis

Since the Maavil Aru-Muthur confrontations the security situation has worsened and is getting hopelessly out of control. More deprivation, suffering and insecurity spreads with every passing day.

There is little communication with the North where a curfew has been imposed. The Eastern Province is tense. Trapped civilian communities are either in need of food or somehow manage to cross over as displaced persons. The state sector, local authorities and other agencies grapple admirably with these growing humanitarian crises with little help from those responsible for the recurring violence and instability.

It also seems equally futile calling for an end to war. Other more powerful pro-war agendas seem to prevail on both sides. False perceptions of nationalism and military prestige; and short term military agendas that provoke revenge are getting out of hand. They seem to matter more than the welfare and right to life of the people.

Mature Leadership

And yet there is no alternative to repeatedly challenging the LTTE and GoSL to take control of the situation. We have learnt over a period of thirty years that war solves nothing. It only destroys the best things in life. Strong and purposeful initiatives for a ceasefire, even during fighting must take note of these lessons. It is a sign of mature leadership. As long as the GoSL and LTTE fail to talk to each other and take steps towards peace, whatever the provocation to war, they fail as leaders of the people they claim to represent. It is the sacred duty of the GoSL in particular to lead the country back to stability, development and peace for all.

Dr. Palitha Kohonna's call for peace talks is timely and must be seriously and visibly supported by the GoSL. The LTTE must respond. Will one of the parties have the magnanimity and courage to declare an unilateral ceasefire and will the other have the foresight and graciousness to respond? The unseen God, our children and future generations will yet forgive us for all the terrible things we have done to each other if this can yet happen. ❑

Civilians urgently need protection - ICJ

ICJ calls on Government and LTTE to publicly state commitment to international humanitarian law

August 17 - The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) today called on the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to abide by international human rights and humanitarian law, cease any indiscriminate or targeted attacks against civilians and immediately guarantee access for independent human rights investigators.

"Civilians have borne the brunt of the recent escalation of fighting. Yet international human rights law guarantees the right to life and the fundamental rule of international humanitarian law is that those fighting must distinguish between civilian and military targets, between civilians and combatants", said Nicholas Howen, ICJ Secretary-General.

While urging both the Government and the LTTE to return to negotiations, the ICJ acknowledged that Sri Lanka appears to be plunging towards a renewed civil war.

"Even in war, there are legal limits. In the past, both sides in Sri Lanka have violated the laws of war, resulting in gross abuses that disproportionately affected the civilian population," said Nicholas Howen. "We call on the Government and the LTTE to publicly and immediately reaffirm that they will abide by international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including, Article 3, common to the four Geneva Conventions, and customary international humanitarian law".

Clashes between the Sri Lankan security forces and the LTTE have been reported in the North, North-East and the East of the country. UNHCR has reported that over 50,000 people have been displaced since the flare-up of violence in Muttur and its surrounding areas in Trincomalee at the end of July. UNHCR estimates that in Muttur and Eachchilampattu alone around 15,000 people are currently trapped due to the violence.

The Government has confirmed that on 14 August its security forces carried out an aerial attack on an LTTE camp in Mullaittivu District, which the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM) has reportedly said killed 19 girls aged between 16 and 19 years. The SLMM and UNICEF, who both visited the site of the attack, have reportedly said that there was no sign that the LTTE was using the site for military purposes.

In the last two weeks there have been a series of extrajudicial executions, including the killing of 17 aid workers from Action Internationale Contre la Faim (ACF) in and around their office in Muttur on 5 August; and the killing of Katheshwaran Loganathan, the Deputy Secretary General of the Government's Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP) and formerly the head of the Peace and Conflict Analysis Unit at the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), in Colombo on 12 August. On 8 August S Sivardasan, a senior member of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), was wounded in a car bombing in Colombo that resulted in the deaths of three civilians including his bodyguard.

In areas in which fighting is taking place the media have reported deaths of civilians resulting from artillery attacks, including the death of 17 Muslim sheltering in a religious school attached to a mosque in Muttur on 3 August.

The ICJ welcomed the statement of 11 August by the four Co-Chairs (the European Union, Japan, Norway and the United States) calling for independent, international investigations of allegations of serious human rights abuses.

"Both sides must now guarantee free and unhindered access for independent investigations", said Nicholas Howen. "This is the only way to cut through the claims and counter-claims, clarify the facts and identify who may be responsible so that action can be taken", he added.

The ICJ said that beyond individual investigations and action to ensure those responsible are held accountable, Sri Lanka needs a proper international human rights field operation to help in the protection of civilians.

The ICJ also called on United Nations member states to recognise the seriousness of the deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka.

"The deteriorating situation in Sri Lanka should no longer rest solely on the shoulders of Norway and the other Co-Chairs", said Nicholas Howen. "UN members states have the responsibility to ensure that the Human Rights Council considers and acts on Sri Lanka during its second session in September and at future sessions", he said.

Background

Both parties to the conflict are bound by Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and by those rules of international humanitarian law that have become part of customary international law. Common Article 3 provides that civilians and other non-combatants are protected against violence to life and person, in particular murder, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture; hostage taking; humiliating and degrading treatment; and the passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court. It is a crime under international law to commit a serious violation of Common Article 3, as well as to commit other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in internal conflicts, including intentionally directing attacks against civilians or against religious or educational buildings. Individuals can be prosecuted for such crimes in Sri Lanka and in other countries. The Government is also bound by international human rights law. ❑

Amnesty calls for urgent action to protect civilians

August 18 - Amnesty International is alarmed that escalating fighting in Sri Lanka has resulted in the death and injury of scores of civilians, the displacement of more than 160,000 people, and the destruction of homes, schools, and places of worship. The organisation is dismayed that neither the government security forces nor the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) appear to be taking adequate precautions to protect civilian lives. Even when serious violations of international humanitarian law are reported, both sides trade accusations and counter-accusations rather than take steps to address or put a halt to violations.

Amnesty International is concerned by the extent and seriousness of the violations reported, the lack of adequate protection for civilians, and restrictions on access to the worst affected areas. Persistent uncertainty about what has actually occurred and who is responsible for alleged war crimes and other violations of international law is fueling fear and panic among the civilian population.

Amnesty International believes that the establishment of a strong and effective international human rights monitoring operation is urgently needed to respond to the dramatic deterioriation of the human rights and humanitarian situation. Such a monitoring mission must have the full co-operation of both the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, and the support of the United Nations and its member states.

Recent incidents recorded by Amnesty International that demand further investigation by independent human rights experts include:

● On 3 August, at least 17 civilians, including children, were killed and 80 injured when four schools in Muttur were hit by shelling, according to reports.

● On or around 4 August, hundreds of Muslim civilians fleeing the fighting in Muttur were diverted by the LTTE into an area under its control. The LTTE has said it was providing safe passage for the group to move away from the battle areas. An unknown number of Muslim men were allegedly separated from the group and taken away with their hands tied. Some reports indicated that the men were executed. Others among the group of displaced people were reported to have been caught in the crossfire between the LTTE and government forces, and a number of them reportedly died or were injured.

● On 6 August, the bodies of 15 aid workers with the French aid agency Action Against Hunger (Action Contre la Faim, or ACF) were discovered lying face-down on the front lawn of ACF's Muttur office, with bullet wounds indicating that they had been shot at close range. The bodies of two more staff members were found on 8 August in a car nearby, indicating that they may have been killed while trying to escape. The government has invited an Australian forensic expert to assist with the investigation, but has prevented international truce monitors from visiting the site.

● Late on the night of 8 August, a roadside bomb reportedly hit an ambulance killing five people - a medical doctor, his wife, two nurses and the driver of the ambulance. The incident occurred in LTTE-controlled territory near the village of Nedunkerny, in Vavuniya district. The government has accused the LTTE of responsibility for the attack, while the LTTE has blamed the Sri Lanka Army's "Deep Penetration Unit", which it says operates within LTTE-controlled territory.

● On 10 August, renewed aerial bombardment by the Sri Lankan air force of LTTE-controlled areas in Trincomalee district reportedly resulted in a number of civilian casualties. The LTTE claimed that at least 50 civilians were killed and more than 200 wounded in aerial attacks on populated areas. A military spokesman told the Associated Press news agency that the army does not target civilians but added that the LTTE were "known for using human shields and they placed their gun positions around civilian villages." Casualty figures and competing accounts of the bombardment could not be independently verified.

● On 13 August, rockets and artillery shells reportedly hit the St.Philip Mary Church and surrounding homes in Allaipiddy on Kayts islet, just off the northwestern coast of the Jaffna Peninsula, killing at least 15 civilians and wounding 54.There were conflicting reports as to whether the shells were fired by government forces or by the LTTE.

● On 14 August, as many as 51 teenage girls were reportedly killed and more than 100 wounded when Sri Lankan air forces dropped between 12 to 16 bombs on a compound in the northern district of Mullaitivu, in LTTE-controlled territory. UNICEF reported that the victims had come from various schools in Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi districts to attend course in first aid. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, an international team of experts charged with monitoring the compliance of both parties with the 2002 ceasefire agreement, said the target of the air strikes was a former orphanage with no evidence of military installations or weapons nearby. A national security spokesperson said the air force had conducted air strikes on an LTTE training base at Puthukudiyurippu in Mullaitivu, and that "between 50 and 60 young LTTE terrorist cadres were killed and many were injured."

There also have been a series of attacks in the capital, Colombo, the nature and targets of which strongly suggest the involvement of the LTTE:

(continued on next page)

Civilians caught in the cross fire

Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai

The internally displaced people of Muthur want to stay in Negombo until the violence and killings are stopped in Muthur

The total population of Muthur before displacement was 63,690 persons (47,272 families). Out of these Muslims were 52.5% (35,319 families) , Tamil were 47.3% (28,199), and Sinhalese were 1.7% (172 families) . Men were 31,383, and women were 32,307 according the Muthur divisional secretariat based on the survey carried out in December 2005.There are 96 villages in Muthur divisional secretariat area.

So far 50,259 Muthur civilians have been registered as displaced. The total Internally Displaced People as at 9 am on August 8th 2006 in camps were 41,270 persons (Trincomalee Town 6 camps- 2828 persons, Kantale 8 camps- 19,880 persons, Seruwila 16 camps- 10,292 persons, Kinniya 6 camps- 1678 persons, Thampalagamam 9 camps- 6592 people and one camp in Negombo-153 persons.) The people left to other districts such as Kurunegala, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Kandy and Colombo as well.

There are 33 families (153 persons) arrived in Negombo from Kantale on August 8th 2006 at 2am. They are staying at Al-Hilal Central College in Periaymullai, Negombo. There are 73 men, and 80 women staying here. The people will be relocated in Kamachoda Jumma Mosque compound tomorrow, in order to hand over the Al-Hilal Central College buildings back to start classes.

They were not displaced outside Muthur during the height of war in 1990s. This is the first time that, they are displaced to a longer distance.

The following information is gathered from various witnesses among the Internally Displaced People from Muthur.

"They were told to leave Muthur immediately by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The people of Muthur sought refuge in schools and mosques, which came under attack of the Sri Lankan forces. People started to move again from place to place. The LTTE diverted the fleeing Muslims from the main road (A15) to their controlled area which had a check point established with many cardres on the spot.

The men were separated by the LTTE from women, and told the women and children to move on. But many women refused to leave , until the men are freed. Some men were released, the rest is still missing. They were taken 200 hundred yards away from the rest of the crowd. Their hands were tied at back. The loved ones of those who are still missing do not know what has happened to them so far.

At the same time the Sri Lankan forces continued to fire multi-barrel launchers, which led the fleeing families to run in different directions. No one knows exactly whether they would have been killed by LTTE or Sri Lanka military attack.

Most people of Muthur have left their homes without another set of clothes for change. They starved for 48 hours. They walked a long way on barefoot in hot sun. They drank muddy water. Most could not cope with the heat and fainted. The feeble could not be accompanied longer. The sick died on the way. They could not carry the dead bodies along with them to carry out the religious rites. The dead bodies of loved ones left alone on the roads. The living family members feel that, they are deprived of their duties.

They could not take the injured for treatment. Some lost their valuables such as cash and jewelleries. They said prayers while walking, and pleaded for help. People cried out of fear. The people including the children witnessed the horrors of war. The children are traumatized. Parents say that, they are not eating properly, and not having a deep sleep. The children panic for any noise, thinking shells and bombs. Their education is discontinued due to displacement."

The people want peace, and live

(continued on next page)

(continued from page 16)

● On 8 August, a car bomb attack on S. Sivathasan, a senior member of the Eelam People's Democratic Party and former Member of Parliament, killed the politician's bodyguard and a three-year-old child who happened to be standing near the roadside. S. Sivathasan and five other civilians were injured in the blast.

● On 12 August, unidentified gunmen assassinated Ketheshwaran Loganathan, the deputy secretary general of the government's Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP) and former director of the Colombo-based Centre for Policy Alternatives, a research centre that specializes in conflict resolution and good governance.

●On 14 August, a bomb hit a convoy carrying the Pakistan's High Commissioner Bashir Wali Mohamed; the ambassador escaped without injury, but at least seven people were killed in the blast including four military bodyguards and three civilian bystanders.

Amnesty International appeals to both the government and the LTTE to comply with international humanitarian law, which prohibits murder or other violence to those taking no active part in hostilities. As a matter of urgency, both parties to the conflict must ensure that their forces comply with the principle of distinction between civilian and military targets and do not target civilians or carry out indiscriminate attacks. ❑

in harmony. They recollect the peaceful days in 2002,2003 soon after the Ceasefire was implemented. Now they want an assurance from both parties for them to go back to their own place, and start their lives again. The most of the people shed tears, while exchanging their experiences. It is a new different environment for them to adopt and adjust. But they have no better choice.

"I was living with my daughter, son in law and grand daughter, who is just fifteen day old. We were asked to leave Muthur by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. We had no choice, except to safe guard our lives. Sri Lankan forces have started to shell before we went to a safer place. I crawled under a bed with my just born grand daughter. She got injured on her spine. There was no treatment. We starved for three days without a dip of water. There was not even dirty water available to drink. Later we managed to move to 65th milepost. We walked with barefoot for fifteen kilometers. We got some food from the residents. We shared the food with others after three days. Then we walked to Thoppur. We walked the whole Friday. We pleaded for help, and got into tractors to get to Kantale. My daughter and grand daughter were killed in 2004 Tsunami. I am afraid to return to Muthur" says Ibrahim Faleela Umma (55) from Thakkuanagar in Muthur

"I am married and having one year old daughter. We have witnessed a lot of unwanted things, while displacing from Muthur. I am living in a room, while my wife and daughter are living in another room in the welfare camp. There is no family life. I do not know how long we are going to live like this" says a small scale businessman Seeni Mohamed Yusuf (25) of Akkaraichchenai in Muthur

"My son is three month old. I lost my house and properties in the recent violence in Muthur. I have nothing left. There are more people like me from Muthur. I walked a long unforgettable journey in my life with my child without food and water for more than forty eight hours. I can't face the same situation again in my life" says Anwar Muzammila (30) of Habeebnagar in Muthur

"We were told to go to schools mosques to seek shelter. But the Sri Lankan forces started shelling those places, where we sought refuge. No place was safe. We were trapped in between fighting by both parties. We are Innocent civilians, who want lead a normal life. I walked for twenty kilometers in hot sun. I had neither food nor water for two days. I was about to faint. Then somebody provided little water, and washed my face. I have already lost my wife and six year old daughter in Boxing day Tsunami. I lost my house as well. I have restarted my life after Tsunami. I have to live to take care of my six children, who are not yet married and living with me. Almighty Allah has to find a way for me to get rid of this agony" says a small scale businessman, Kathar Mohideen Naina Mohamed (62) (tears in his eyes while talking) of Thakkuanagar in Muthur

Internally Displaced People say that, they are afraid as to how long they have to stay in the welfare camps, as length less violence continues

"We want an assurance from the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam for our lives and properties. We are not engaged in fighting. Also we not involved in politics. But why are we targeted? This is not acceptable at all" says Sultan Naazeer (35) of Thakkuanagar in Muthur

"We have suffered a lot, since we left our homes in Muthur. Students have no eduction due to displacement. The year five scholarship exam has been postponed in Trincomalee district due to current situation. We are not against any community. we want to live in harmony with other communities in the area" says a school master Abdul Salam Abdul Subuhan (49) of Muthur town

The space has to be shared, as more internally displaced people like to come to Negombo for health and safety reasons

"I had a small boutique shop. I earned Rupees 300/= as an average daily income. I have neither money nor space to start a small shop now. There are five members in my family. I have a son and a daughter. Apart from my own children, I am looking after my niece, whose mother was killed in Tsunami. She is just two year old. My mother was killed in 2004 Tsunami. I have not got a house yet. I was living thirty meters away from the sea, before leaving my village on Friday. We were relocated in between the sea and river after Tsunami" says A.L.Gafoor Rajisa (30) of Thakku anagar in Muthur

"I do not know who is alive and who is not alive in my family. Because all are scatted everywhere. There is no way to make contacts with our loved ones. I left Muthur with my wife and four young children with the dress which we wore" says a labourer A.L.Jasheen (39) of Periya Palam in Muthur

"I heard shooting sound July 31st 2006 night, and woke my husband. He said it must be between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Sri Lankan forces.There was electricity since 9.45 pm on the same day. We heard firing being exchanged between both parties. Bullets fallen on our roof. We thought that, it was not safe to stay there, and left in night dresses and gone and stayed with our relatives. We had neither food nor water. Later we all moved to Akkaraichchenai for safety. We cooked rice. But we did not have vegetables or fish. The shops were looted. We ate rice with coconut.Our children did not have proper meal since then. My niece got injured in front of my eyes, while we were staying in a Matharasa" says Mohamed Subair Mehroon Nisha (30) of Thakkuanagar in Muthur

The internally displaced people of Muthur want to stay in Negombo until the violence and killings are stopped in Muthur

(Source: humanityashore, 8 August 2006)

Kethesh Loganathan Assassinated

Ketheshwaran Loganathan, 53, until recently Head of the Conflict Analysis Unit at the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), and lately Deputy Secretary General of the Peace Secretariat in Colombo, was shot dead allegedly by two suspected Tamil Tiger gunmen at his residence in Dehiwala.

According to police, his assassins had arrived in a van at around 9.15 pm on Saturday (12) and had rung the home bell. Conversing both in Sinhala and Tamil, the gunmen introduced themselves as CID officers and asked Mr. Loganathan to open the gate. Before he was shot, the assailants had repeatedly asked him to confirm his name. As Mr Loganathan came out to open the entrance gate and asked the men show their identity, he was shot many times. The post mortem examination revealed that Mr. Loganathan had been shot at point blank range and had suffered injuries in the head, chest and one hand.

Kethesh and his wife Bhavani lived in an old-style house along Vandervert Place in Dehiwela, some eight miles from the capital Colombo. The Police said that Mr. Loganathan's residence was in an isolated area where there was hardly any security. "There was an army patrol moving regularly in that area but there was no permanent police post or any special security provided to Mr. Loganathan."

Holding a senior position as Deputy Secretary General of Peace Secretariat, he would have been entitled to be provided with adequate round-the-clock security and be housed in secure premises. In fact, it is learnt that he was offered such facilities, but Mr Loganathan had refused the offer as he wanted to remain as detached and independent as possible from the Government.

The remains of Kethesh Loganathan lay at the Art Gallery, Colombo for the public to pay their last respects before his cremation which took place on 15 August at 4 pm at the General Cemetery, Kanatte, Borella in Colombo attended by a large and distinguished gathering of academics, foreign diplomats, politicians, human rights and peace activists and journalists.

After the Hindu last rites were concluded, with the blowing of the conch shell, the remains of Kethesh Loganathan left the funeral parlour to the cemetery at 4 pm.

Bawani, the widow of Kethesh Logananthan was accompanied by her brother who lit the remains.

A close relative of Kethesh who was at the crematorium said that C. Loganathan, the late father of Kethesh, who was the first Sri Lankan General Manager of Bank of Ceylon, was an ardent devotee of Thiru Ketheshwaram, in Mannar which is one of the foremost temples of Hindu God Siva in Sri Lanka. It was late Loganathan's devotion to the temple that made him to name his son as Ketheshwaran, who later came to be known as just Kethesh among his kith and kin and the large circle of colleagues and comrades.

Kethesh had a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Georgetown University, Washington DC and a MA in Development Studies from the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague. He worked at MARGA and then took over his father's institute in Jaffna.

Loganathan was also engaged in Tamil politics from 1983 as a member of the Eelam People's Liberation Front and was a member of the Tamil delegation at the Thimpu peace talks in 1985. He withdrew from Tamil militant politics and the EPRLF in 1994. He continued to be engaged in proximity talks leading to the Indo-Lanka Accord of August 1987 and also made representations to the Managala Moonesinghe Parliamentary Select Committee process tasked to formulating a constitutional solution to the national question. In 1996 Loganathan wrote a book "Sri Lanka: Lost Opportunities" published by the Centre for Policy Research and Analysis (CEPRA), University of Colombo. He was a founder board member of the Centre for Policy Alternatives before joining the Peace Secretariat recently.

Acadamic and political commentator, Dayan Jayatillake, said, "Kethesh Loganathan was one of those 'best minds'. He was above all else a committed, engaged intellectual. He was indubitably one of the sharpest analytical intellects, one of the finest Sri Lankan minds of his day..... Kethesh Loganathan, Neelan Tiruchelvam, Rajini Thiranagama, Lakhman Kadirgamar. Brilliant minds, interesting, attractive and even compelling personalities, with diverse choices and trajectories, and yet, a common fate: murdered by the Tigers. These names and many more, are a roll-call of the Tamil tragedy and larger Sri Lankan lament..... Neelan, Lakshman Kadirgamar, Kethesh: Harvard, Oxford, Georgetown. What gems of the small Sri Lankan Tamil community! What priceless resources for their society and South Asia! They went their different ways and died violently, assassinated in the same town, by the same organisation, the Tigers, led by the same man, Velupillai Prabhakaran."

Condemnation

A statement issued on behalf of the U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan on Monday (14) said that he "deplores the assassination over the weekend of Ketheshwaran Loganathan, deputy secretary general of the Government Peace Secretariat and veteran Tamil human rights advocate,."

The United States Embassy in Colombo in a statement on Tuesday (15) said: "The United States condemns the August 12 murder of Deputy Secretary General of the Government Peace Secretariat, Ketheshwaran Loganathan, and mourns the loss of an individual dedicated to bridging communities and building peace in Sri Lanka."

The Nordic Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) condemned the assassination. In a letter to Peace Sec-

retariat Chief Dr. Palitha Kohona, SLMM head Maj. Gen. Ulf Henricsson said, "After having worked with Kethishwaran Loganathan, and last time met him on Friday 11 August 2006, the message of his death came as a shock, not only for SLMM, but also for all people longing for peace. Taking part in his experiences, his well founded arguments and his professionalism has been a pleasure for all people who got to work with him.There are no words strong enough to condemn this vicious and cold blooded murder of yet another statesman living for peace."

In condemning the assassination, President Mahinda Rajapakse said, "This contemptible act by the LTTE, coming, exactly one year after the assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, shows the LTTE's determination to eliminate those of the Tamil community who dare to oppose its terrorism and are dedicated to the cause of peace and democratic rights for all people in Sri Lanka."

"The killing of Loganathan who had the courage to accept the position of Deputy Secretary General of the Peace Secretariat demonstrates the contempt that the LTTE has for intellectuals among the Tamil community who differ with its views, and once again raises serious doubts of the LTTE's acceptance of negotiations towards peace and more importantly its commitment to a lasting peace in Sri Lanka."

Director of the National Peace Council Jehan Perera said that "Kethesh Loganathan worked relentlessly to usher in a political solution based on power devolution. His assassination would weaken any prospects for a speedy settlement of the current conflict".

Perera vehemently condemning the assassination said, the LTTE which has allegedly carried out the killing, lacks the basic ethics in democracy and governance. He urged the Government and the international community to adopt the carrot and stick method in peace building where it is appropriate to keep the LTTE within a democratic frame. "I believe all the parties concerned with the peace process should exert pressure on the LTTE to reform itself and to change their ways," he said adding that the pressure should be accompanied with correct incentives.

Rt. Revd. Dr. Dulęep de Chickera, Bishop of Colombo, said in a statement, "The utterly senseless killing of Kethesh Loganathan, a relentless advocate of a peaceful solution to the ethnic question, has shocked the Nation and must be condemned unreservedly. He gave his life for the cause of peace and justice and will be remembered for this."

Constitutional Affairs and National Integration Minister and General Secretary of the Communist Party, DEW Gunasekera, in a statement said, "We condemn the brutal assassination of our dear friend Kathiswaran Loganathan, Deputy Head of the Government Peace Secretariat and Secretary of the Political Committee of the All Party Conference.

"His contribution to the social thinking in relation to national unity, communal harmony, and good gov-

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emance was strikingly significant. I value his intellectual inputs immensely. He was an invaluable asset to the Peace Secretariat.

"His analytical mind, cheerful disposition, sharp insight, spirit of collectivism, indomitable courage - all were sterling qualities required for the assignment he was entrusted with. His loss is deeply felt by us. He joins the galaxy of those Tamil leaders who were brutally murdered for having stood fearlessly for the cause of reason, and human dignity. He will live forever in our hearts."

The Muslim Council of Sri Lanka in a statement said that the "Muslim Council of Sri Lanka joins the rest of the peace loving citizens of the country in unreservedly condemning the murder of Kethesh Loganathan, who fearlessly voiced and worked towards achieving the aspirations of the Tamil and Muslim people in establishing peace with human rights, democracy and dignity in the country where all communities could live as equal citizens.

"The Muslim community will remember Kethesh Loganathan as a courageous and outspoken Tamil intellectual who understood the aspirations of the Muslim community and voiced against the marginalization and alienation of Muslims from the peace process as Deputy Secretary General of the Government Peace Secretariat."

Describing the assassination as a great shock to him personally, Tamil United Liberation Front Leader V. Anandasangaree said: "Prabhakaran must now come out of his den and tell us what he wants and how much more blood he requires to quench his thirst. No man with any sense will kill a person like Kethesh, a perfect gentleman and a great intellectual."

"His demise is a great loss to the Tamil community in particular and the country as a whole. A soft spoken man, he was acknowledged by many as the best choice for the very important post he held," he said adding, "This type of killings will not help Prabhakaran and his gang. Ultimately he will find only Thamilselvam as the sole representatives of the Tamils."

CPA salutes Kethesh's courage, independence and integrity

Whilst the identity of Kethesh Loganathan's killers has not been established and no single organisation or actor has the monopoly of political killing in the current climate of division and violence in the country, the LTTE's record of assassinations of political opponents and Kethesh's public profile as one of their most trenchant critics, invariably marks them out as prime suspects, the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) said reacting to the assassination of Mr.Loganathan on 12 August.

The CPA's Executive Director Dr. Paikiasothy in a statement has said, "We call on the LTTE to refute this by unequivocally condemning his murder. We call on the Government of Sri Lanka to conduct a speedy and impartial investigation into Kethesh's murder and to ensure that the perpetrators are apprehended and brought to justice."

The statement issued by the CPA on 13 August said::

"Kethesh Loganathan was a valued colleague, a former Director of the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) and the first head of its Peace and Conflict Analysis Unit. He was a passionate advocate of human rights, an unflinching champion of the rights of the Tamil people and of an end to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka with democracy, justice and dignity for all.

CPA condemns his murder and extends our sincere condolences to his widow Bhawani and members of his family for their and our tragic loss. Whilst Kethesh was an ardent and proud nationalist, he brought the same fervour, passion and commitment to the cause of unity in diversity, multi-culturalism and a settlement of the ethnic conflict based on meaningful power sharing. He uncompromisingly believed that the liberation of a people could not be founded on fear, the celebration of death, the negation or even suspension of basic democratic values. This made him a stringent and fearless critic of the LTTE for their insistence on being the sole representatives of the Tamil people and for their reliance on terror, repression and violence.

Kethesh never failed to criticise successive governments of Sri Lanka for their espousal of majoritarian democracy and insensitivity to the rights and aspirations of all the people who inhabit our island. He believed in the liberation of the Tamil people through the espousal of democratic values and in the reform of the state through a social contract based on human dignity and mutual self respect.

Whilst the identity of his killers has not been established and no single organisation or actor has the monopoly of political killing in the current climate of division and violence in our country, the LTTE's record of assassinations of political opponents and Kethesh's public profile as one of their most trenchant critics, invariably marks them out as prime suspects. We call on the LTTE to refute this by unequivocally condemning his murder. We call on the Government of Sri Lanka to conduct a speedy and impartial investigation into Kethesh's murder and to ensure that the perpetrators are apprehended and brought to justice.

His killers have senselessly taken a life. They have not destroyed the values that life championed and upheld. These values live on and will have to be enshrined in a peace settlement, if it is to be one with justice and democracy for all.

Kethesh, we salute you for your courage, independence and integrity, passion and commitment in the advancement of this cause.

"A voice for democracy has been silenced"

August 14 – "Shocked and grief-stricken, SLDF (Sri Lanka Democracy Forum) unreservedly condemns the murder of Kethesh Loganathan, a rare man for his times who continued to fearlessly voice the aspirations of the Tamil people - of peace with human rights, democracy and dignity," the Sri Lanka Democracy Forum said in a press release issued on 14 August

The press release further said, "Kethesh stood for truth and justice, yearned and worked tirelessly for peace with human rights for his people. He has been silenced by the guns of the LTTE, who at this moment are

taking the Tamil people on a journey of destruction. Like many other courageous and outspoken Tamil intellectuals who have fallen victim to LTTE's terror, Kethesh stands out as one whose life spanned a varied and rich political trajectory.

"A former militant, then academic, journalist, and tireless advocate of human rights and a return to democratic values in Tamil politics, Kethesh was one of the leading activists of the dissenting Tamil community who firmly believed in a negotiated democratic political solution to the ethnic conflict as opposed to the bleakness of a maudlin Tamil nationalism.

Kethesh himself in rethinking the narrow nationalism of his early militancy, challenged among other things its marginalization and alienation of Muslims. Kethesh's contributions to peace efforts began in 1985 when he represented the EPRLF at the Thimpu conference.

He was involved in the discussion that framed the Indo-Lanka peace accord and later the Mangala Moonesinghe Parliamentary Select Committee discussions for devolving power to the North and East.

After his resignation from the EPRLF in 1995, he continued with his attempts on working for peace and a democratic solution as the Director of the Conflict and Peace Analysis Unit of the think-tank, Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA).

His consistent campaign to make human rights central to the peace process, his critique in arguing for a redesign of the Ceasefire Agreement, showed his independence of mind and spirit, intellectual honesty and political integrity.

Many progressive Sri Lankans involved in the campaign for peace with democracy and human rights were inspired by Kethesh's determined campaign for human rights and against political killings.

It is precisely his sense of urgency and concerns over human rights and political killings and the slow progress on the part of the Southern political formations in arriving at a formula for a peace settlement to devolve power to the minorities that motivated Kethesh to join the Peace Secretariat.

The totalitarian hold of the LTTE on the Tamil polity and the resultant barrenness of the Tamil political terrain, the deafening silence of the Tamil media on the relentless campaign of political killings by the LTTE and other armed groups, leave very little space for people like Kethesh to make a meaningful contribution.

It was his unswerving commitment to the cause of the Tamil people winning their legitimate rights within the framework of democratic pluralism that made him to remain in Sri Lanka. At a time when many Tamils chose to leave the island seeking greener pastures abroad, Kethesh's decision to continue to remain at home, in spite of the security threat he faced, demonstrated his sense of dedication and sacrifice which had been the hallmark of his entire life.

By the political assassination of Kethesh, an intrepid and unequivocal voice for Tamil democracy and human rights has been cruelly silenced by the LTTE. SLDF calls upon progressive Sri Lankans of all communities to look to Kethesh's memory and rededicate their commitment and to redouble their efforts in the struggle for human rights and democracy." ❑

Kethesh vindicated amid unfolding humanitarian tragedy

Jehan Perera

"Like a prophet in the ancient tradition, Kethesh spoke truth in the face of power, and it is a tragedy that his prophecy has come true."

It was a week of tragedies. The tragedies were micro and macro in their impacts, personal and less so. But they were tragedies all the same. Their was the death of the three year old girl due to a botched assassination attempt on an anti-LTTE politician opposite a girl's school and barely a hundred meters from where I live in a residential part of Colombo. The sight of her grandfather, who worked in the home of a rich family nearby, weeping by the side of the little bundle on the road was a pathetic television image. It is ironic that the children of top government and LTTE leaders live richly abroad while those on whose behalf they claim to fight for, and also child soldiers, die in pathetic circumstances.

There was the assassination of Kethesh Loganathan, deputy head of the government's peace secretariat in his home in a manner unbefitting of a national liberation struggle. Kethesh was a friend, a peace activist, a newspaper columnist and a teacher.

There was also the uprooting of 40,000 people, most of them Muslims, due to the LTTE attack on the town of Mutur. Overnight, these Muslim people became the chief victims of a fight that was not their own. There was also the killing of over a hundred of them, allegedly by the LTTE, after being separated from the rest. There was the execution style killing of 17 Tamil aid workers in Mutur by suspected security forces personnel. There was the air force bombing in Vakarai that has reportedly killed refugees that fled to LTTE controlled areas from Muttur. The list can go on and on.

Today Sri Lanka faces a humanitarian disaster of major proportions. According to humanitarian workers, the situation is as bad as it has ever been in the 20 years of war, or even worse. Over a hundred thousand people have become refugees in a matter of a fortnight.

These are people who did not expect the war to come back after the Ceasefire Agreement. What is most tragic about this phase of war is that it is undeclared, although it is raging in full force in parts of the north east. Both sides continue to say that they are prepared to uphold the Ceasefire Agreement even as their military forces engage in pitched battles. Perhaps due to the disjuncture between words and deeds, there is a climate of impunity.

Humanitarian organizations have been complaining that they cannot take relief supplies to where they are most needed. Roads may have been closed due to security considerations by the security forces.

These have implications that go

beyond providing relief to refugees. These road closures have implications for the economic life of the people, in the same manner as the closing of the water sluice gate by the LTTE at Mavil Aru had economic implications on the rice farmers of the area.

When roads are closed, people on one side of the road cannot access their rice fields on the other side of the road. People cannot transport their perishable crops to the market or sell their milk. They suffer and no one outside knows of their suffering.

Peace now

From the people's point of view the killings must stop and they must be allowed to live in their familiar habitats. Therefore the news that the LTTE had sent a message through the head of the international monitoring mission that it wished to negotiate with the government came as the best news in a desperate situation. Whatever the temporary vicissitudes of the military battlefield, one factor remains uppermost, and this is that ethnic conflicts do not end through war. They only end through political reforms that win the acceptance of the masses of people.

If there is no political solution that comes through negotiation, what is guaranteed is a festering conflict that will be full scale war at worst or a sapping guerilla war at best.

LTTE spokespersons have been reported as denying that the LTTE made any such offer of peace negotiations with the government. They have pointed out that in the past all their dealings with the government in respect of negotiations was through the facilitation of the Norwegian government.

But on this occasion the offer to negotiate has been communicated by Ulf Henriccson, the Swedish head of the SLMM. Perhaps this was an LTTE strategy to ensure deniability, if their offer to negotiate was spurned by the government. Or it could have been a general expression of the LTTE's willingness to talk peace if the government is committed to peace.

There will undoubtedly be a school of thought within the government that argues that any LTTE offer to cease hostilities at this stage and engage in negotiations is due to their military weakness, and the desire to gain time to regroup and recoup their strength. On the other hand, there will be other voices within the government that argue that the war has already cost far too many lives, and if it is prolonged it can lead to the loss of more lives and to economic disaster. It will also be only a matter of time before the LTTE is able to hit a soft target that causes massive dislocation throughout the country. In the past the LTTE have been able to penetrate all defences and attack the country's Central Bank, oil refinery and international airport, and wreak tremendous economic damage. There is always a better time to cease hostilities and to negotiate. That time is now. It is sooner rather than later.

Tragically, the elimination of Kethesh Loganathan from the government's peace secretariat will do much harm to the prospects for a negotiated settlement that is based on a sharing of power and on a respect for human rights. Kethesh was a person who used to argue that the peace process, as it was conceptualized in 2002, was flawed. He pointed out that the peace process relied too much on the Ceasefire Agreement as its centre piece. The Ceasefire Agreement had many deficiencies as an instrument of peace all by itself. Kethesh grieved when time and again his former comrades in the Tamil militancy who had joined the mainstream society were gunned down by the LTTE.

Political solution

When the LTTE first began its campaign of assassinations, less than a year after they signed the Ceasefire Agreement, Kethesh insisted that civil society organizations should take up the matter. He warned that *the neglect of human rights, and the failure to uphold the right of people* to live without fear of being gunned down by assassins, was fundamental to the peace process. Like a prophet in the ancient tradition, he spoke truth in the face of power, and it is a tragedy that his prophecy has come true. It is now clear that the Ceasefire Agreement did not adequately address the issue of human rights and of the participation of the Muslim community in the peace process.

The LTTE attack on the town of Muttur which is predominantly Muslim made them helpless victims of another community's fight. This was also the pattern throughout the peace process when the government and LTTE took decisions on behalf of the Muslim community, which was rendered helpless. As refugees today they are again helpless, and the government's blocking of humanitarian access to the conflict areas has made their vulnerability even greater. The fact that the Muslim community has got pummeled in times of both war

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The return to madness after four years of temporary sanity:

- An Interventionist Tribute to Kethesh Loganathan

Rajan Philips

'Sri Lanka: Lost Opportunities' is the title of an important book on Sri Lanka's national question. The good man who wrote that book in 1995, Kethesh Logan-athan, has fallen victim to yet another lost opportunity to give priority to finding a political solution to the national question.

What began euphemistically as a 'humanitarian' dispute over water has now become a full scale war. Several hundreds have been killed, almost a lakh of people are displaced, local and foreign NGO workers have been killed or threatened, and even the High Commissioner for Pakistan has been targeted.

The genie of war has escaped the much cracked ceasefire bottle and it is not going to be easy to put it back. Armed conflict is not a one-day cricket game to declare winners and losers. In this war already, everyone has lost something, the Muslims of the East more than others, but none has gained anything. Neither the government nor the LTTE is in a mood to admit losses and exercise self-restraint. Nor are they capable of conclusively overwhelming each other. They will slow down, as in the past, only when they run out of fuel, have suffered enough blows and need to retreat and recuperate.

Tamil Intellectuals:
LTTE kills, Government betrays

Kethesh Loganathan joins a long list of Tamils killed by Tamils over political differences. The killing of Tamil intellectuals and political leaders has become a predictable crime of the LTTE. Government spokesmen have called on the international community to stop the LTTE from future killings. The international community has done more than its part. The banning of the LTTE in India and several Western countries is a direct result of the LT-TE's violation of the most basic of human rights: LIFE.

The recent EU statement condemns the killing of Loganathan and makes it clear that the EU will not lift its ban until the LTTE stops such killings. Significantly, the EU did not indicate the LTTE's ongoing battles with the Sri Lankan army as a reason for continuing the ban. The international community seems to be adopting a neutral position in the battles between the LTTE and the army, apart from calling on both sides to stop fighting and start talking.

While calling on the LTTE to honour and observe the human rights of the Tamil people, the international community has also been asking the Sri Lankan government to honour and observe the democratic and political rights of the same Tamil people. The entire international community that is interested in Sri Lanka is unanimous in its view that the only way to honour and observe the democratic and political rights of not only the Tamils but also the Muslims is to implement a sustained process of devolution.

Will the Sri Lankan government deliver on this expectation? Or will it again turn a deaf ear to this call of the international community just as the LTTE always turns a deaf ear to calls for observance of the human rights of Tamils and Muslims?

"Devolve or die", wrote Dayan Jaya-tilleke. "Die rather than devolve" seems to be the motto of the JVP and the JHU who are now in the saddle riding the State to war.

"Self-rule and shared rule", opined Kethesh Loganathan. He joined the Government Peace Secretariat to work towards that goal. That the JVP and the JHU should be al-

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and peace makes it necessary that they should be represented by their own representatives in any future peace talks.

Kethesh also pointed out that another weakness in the peace process was that the Ceasefire Agreement was formulated in a political vacuum. The tragedy is that while the LTTE leadership wages a war for Tamil rights, it eliminates Tamil intellectuals who could provide an alternative vision of the future to Tamils and Sinhalese and Muslims alike. The gentle Neelan Tiruchelvam, with his Harvard doctorate, his incisive mind with its broad sweep of the principles of constitutional law, and his ability to get along with all types of people, both local and international, could have been a great strength to Sri Lanka in helping to us to find our way to a mutually acceptable and just political solution. But this was the man the LTTE sent a suicide bomber to eliminate. In the case of Kethesh, his assassins shot him through the gate of his house when he came to meet them.

At seminar after seminar, Kethesh promoted a federal solution to the ethnic conflict. He was a founding member of the Centre for Policy Alternatives, which has become the leading institution that educates the general population on a constitutional solution to the ethnic conflict and on possible federal solutions. Kethesh was in the forefront of advocating a federal solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, in which regional autonomy, equal rights and the unity of the country could be obtained. If there are to be talks between the government and LTTE now, or in the future, this is the issue that will need to be dealt with first, and not put off for an indefinite future time, like in the peace process that commenced in 2002 and ended this year. Hopefully the war will stop and peace talks will start sooner rather than later. ❑

lowed to usurp the government agenda for their own ends is a betrayal of Kethesh Loganathan and everything that he stood for and hoped to achieve through the Peace Secretariat.

What is conveniently forgotten in the lamentations for Loganathan and those who preceded him is that everyone of them, in their different ways, not only stood up to the LTTE but also stood up for the Tamils against the unitary state. The LTTE's human crime of killing is blatant and is readily condemned, but the government's political crime of not doing anything to change the unitary state is rarely mentioned and is easily ignored.

With a macabre sense of timing, Kethesh Loganathan was killed on the anniversary of Lakshman Kadirgamar's assassination. But I must say that Kethesh Loganathan was different from all others before him because he was a rare, if not the only, member of his social milieu to actually become a member of one of the Tamil militant organizations that sprouted after 1977. Each organization has had its bourgeois or notable fellow travelers and benefactors at home and abroad, but few of them crossed the line and became members of these organizations.

Kethesh was not only the son of C. Loganathan, a charming Colombo Tamil socialite and the first Ceylonese national to head the Bank of Ceylon, but also the nephew of C. Tharmakulasingham, C. Loganathan's younger brother, lawyer, and an LSSP stalwart in Point Pedro whose untimely death deprived the LSSP of a leader of potential national prominence but based in the North. C. Loganathan was proud that Kethesh was taking after his uncle in taking to politics.

More than his pedigree Kethesh was unique for his disinterested commitment to the cause of peace, which he understood as being not only the absence of war but also the assurance of justice and equality for Sri Lanka's minorities in a federal structure. I say 'disinterested' because he did not see politics and the peace process as launching pads for fame and career. He did not join the Peace Secretariat to embellish his CV but to do something positive and did so against the advice of many about his own security. To the end he stubbornly preferred the obscurity of his suburban residence to the panoply of state protection.

Destroying the peace process: JVP's remarkable achievement

Kethesh Loganathan (KL) was critical of the Norwegian designed peace process because it did not protect the Tamils who did not agree with the LTTE from being killed by the LTTE. In fact, he agonized over this lacuna. But he did not entertain any illusion that peace could be achieved in Sri Lanka without negotiating with the LTTE. For him peace process meant neither the appeasement of the LTTE nor a military engagement with it. Finally, he urged the need for a southern consensus on a federal solution as the necessary premise for negotiating with the LTTE.

Like many others, KL went further and blamed the Norwegians for all these shortcomings. In my view, the Norwegians have been made the scapegoat for the failure of the government and opposition leaders in the South to take advantage of the peace process and the ceasefire agreement, reach consensus between them, and bring diplomatic and international pressure to bear on the LTTE.

It is not necessary to revisit the dismal roles of individual leaders except to indicate that their omissions and commissions directly led to the polarization and strengthening of political forces that are opposed to the peace process for entirely different and altogether reactionary reasons. I am of course referring to the forces spearheaded by the JVP and the JHU and who oppose the peace process as an infringement of Sri Lanka's sovereignty, a threat to national security and a violation of the unitary constitution. Every one of these charges has been proven wrong.

As I said earlier, the JVP and the JHU have usurped the government agenda and have succeeded in dragging the country into a full scale war. It is a remarkable achievement for two organizations that could never win a sizable measure of support among the Sinhalese on their own and who were trounced at the Local Government elections when they tried to test the waters on their own. The JVP's influence in the government extends beyond the peace process, to stifling sensible decisions in key sectors of the economy based on its outdated approach to trade unionism.

What is worse, the JVP is spearheading a thorough reversal of everything that has been achieved by the People's Alliance on the peace front after 1994. That achievement was nothing less than a sea change in the political orientation of the Sinhalese society and the slow build up of counter-LTTE space within the Tamil society. KL made a sincere and honest effort by joining the Peace Secretariat to build on that achievement and improve on the peace process by addressing its shortcomings that he had been consistently and courageously identifying.

It is fair to say that KL did not join the Peace Secretariat to be a party to restarting the war. But once the war restarted he was reduced to a co-opted Tamil who had no input or relevance to government decision making that was all about war and nothing about peace, let alone devolution. The least the government can do now to honour the memory of Kethesh Loganathan, Neelan Tiruchelvam, Lakshman Kadirgamar and everyone else who paid with their lives for Tamil democracy and Sri Lankan federalism is to unilaterally set about federalizing the state and creating international pressure on the LTTE to accept both. ❑

Water turning into Fire: The Betrayal of People in the East

Sumanasiri Liyanage and Nimanthi Perera-Rajasingham

Is it true that the war began with water? However, later developments suggest that it is not so simple. Vasantha Raja in his article on the Mavil Aru incident said that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) made a big mistake over the Mavil Aru issue by providing space for the Government of Sri Lanka to make a 'strategic move' to drive the LTTE away from the Eastern Province. What he suggests is that the Mavil Aru is only a pretence for the GoSL to implement its planned military strategy. We wish to add, the closing down of the sluice gates of Mavil Aru seems to be a part of the military strategy of the LTTE as well. Some months ago, the LTTE had warned Muttur Muslims that they should leave Muttur immediately. There were hand bills posted and distributed in Muttur asking Muslims to leave the area. Discussions between the community leaders and the LTTE, and heightened security presence stopped this expulsion temporarily. Muttur is a strategically important place for the LTTE to operate against the Sri Lankan Navy and to capture Trincomalee. In this context the closure of the Mavil Aru anicut seems to be clearly linked to the LTTE's strategic move to capture Muttur. It appeared to be an attempt to deviate the focus of the Sri Lankan security forces toward a different location, so that the LTTE could capture Muttur.

Hence, both the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE moved toward strategic action that would enable them to obtain their desired objective. This main objective seems to be the Trincomalee harbour. In the military perspective of the GoSL, the continuous presence of the LTTE in Sampur would be a threat to Trincomalee harbour and its naval base. Simultaneously, the LTTE wishes to gain control of Muttur as this would enable them to strengthen their control over the Trincomalee harbour and attack navy activities in the area. What becomes clear through the actions of both parties is that neither particularly cares for the well-being of the large civilian populations living in this area be they Muslim, Thamil or Sinhalese.

Let us remap some of the incidents of the last few weeks. This 'limited warfare' as it has been called, commenced with the closing of the sluice gates in Mavil Aru on July 20. This meant that there was no water to the area and 15,000 acres of cultivated land were destroyed as a result. We also know from news reports that this water served the daily needs of civilians in the area, such as their drinking water, washing etc. This humanitarian concern enabled the government to do what it called its 'limited war' for humanitarian reasons. We heard time and time again, the likes of defense spokesman Minister Rambukwelle state that the attack to open the sluice gate was "a humanitarian mission and a disaster control measure." What is forgotten in all of this outcry is that the disaster that the government had created is much bigger than the human disaster created by the closure of sluice gates by the LTTE. After all, people were not dying because there was no water as water was provided to them by the government agencies. This incident was however used by the government as an excuse to bomb and attack LTTE controlled areas, and as a result actually endangering the lives of civilian populations.

Hence, the Mavil Aru water issue needs to be understood in the larger context of the broad strategies of the two main actors. The GoSL desired to use this as an excuse to reclaim Sampur and the LTTE desired to use it to recapture Muttur. Neither party was concerned about the welfare and security of the people living in the area.

Humanitarian Crisis and Collateral Damage

In all these strategies, human beings have become nothing more than collateral damage. According to the Sri Lankan Muslim Information Centre (SLMIC) approximately 40, 000 Civilians have been displaced from Muttur as a result of the violence in Muttur. Many of them live today in refugee camps. Other sources state that 50, 259 Muttur civilians have been registered as displaced. The total Internally Displaced People as at 9 am on August 8 th 2006 in camps were 41,270 persons (Trincomalee Town 6 camps- 2828 persons, Kantale 8 camps- 19,880 persons, Seruwila 16 camps -10,292 persons, Kinniya 6 camps- 1678 persons, Thampalagamam 9 camps- 6592 people and one camp in Negombo-153 persons.) The people left to other districts such as Kurunegala, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Kandy and Colombo as well. (see "Displaced people of Muthur want to stay in Negombo" by Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai. The tragedy of what has happened to civilian populations is beyond narration. What has become clear is that the LTTE demanded that the people of Muttur leave it once they entered the town, they also separated men and women and asked the women to leave, but kept behind certain men they felt were 'jihadists.' As people were attempting to leave Muttur, the LTTE checked about 15, 000 men, one by one and chose a few and tied their hands behind their backs and separated them from the others. The LTTE had claimed at the time that they had lists of those jihadists. They separated young men from their families and as families refused to leave these young men behind, they were brutally beaten by the LTTE. We also know that army

forces indiscriminately shelled schools and other places in which civilians were taking refuge, knowing very well that civilians were residing in these school. In the midst of this shelling and counter-shelling, many civilians are now displaced in Kantalai and the surrounding areas.

While a large number of those displaced are Muslims, there are also approximately 15, 000 Thamil IDPs in this lot. The gruesome and violent killings/assassinations of 17 aid workers of Action Contre la Faim are a reminder that Tamil civilians continue to be badly affected by ongoing hostilities. These aid workers were Tamil men and women from the Trincomalee area and their murder marks the callous disregard for aid workers who take risks to provide necessities for those affected by conflict. Kantalai is in no way prepared to cope with the massive influx of people into its environs and we have read how the villagers have felt resentment at this huge inflow of civilians, and also that violence in the area continues. On Tuesday the 8th of August two Muslims were taken away in a white van, and their bodies were found the following day. We have also heard from aid-workers in Kantalai that there have been cross fires as tensions have begun to build. Further, we also heard from aid workers there that lorries bringing in supplies for the displaced Tamil communities were barred by the military from entering the areas and were asked to return.

While in Colombo and Killinochchi elite groups shout for war, the reality of war is quite different. On August the 11th, the JVP had a rally in Colombo 'to show people the way' and to argue for war to 'defeat the tigers.' Wimal Weerawansa highlighted the need of capturing Sampur during a parliamentary speech made on 10th of August. The huge banners by the JVP and around town illustrating army soldiers prepared for battle, looking tough and masculine are to rouse the public toward patriotism and warfare. What LTTE propaganda does is not dissimilar to this. What both forget is the flip side of war, and how this ideology hides other realities and lived experiences. War means, young Sinhala men will return to their families in coffins. It means that Tamil children and youth will be returned to families to be buried along with the thousand others who have died for the nation. It means that women and children, and loved ones will have to face again years of mourning and grief. It means that money which could be spent to reduce the stark poverty in Sri Lanka will instead be spent to kill human beings. It means that the Sri Lankan state will become more indebted as it pays for the high costs of warfare, while more and more welfare expenditure is cut.

Lack of Concern for Human Life and selfish objectives

The GoSL had ample time and ample warning of what has happened in Sri Lanka these past weeks. Muttur was a time bomb waiting to explode. Why didn't the government prepare to meet the consequences of warfare? Did the GoSL have any plans to meet humanitarian disaster that would associate with its military action? Security in Muttur, as reported by the UTHR has been extremely lax. The LTTE too has no concern what so ever for the wellbeing of civilians and thinks it can expel civilians as it wishes. Both have proven that they make no preparation to protect the lives of people before the onset of war.

As is clear in the manner in which relief is carried out in Kantale, the state has very little control of what is happening to the displaced persons, and relies more and more on international aid and aid workers to do the work for them. Despite ministries and departments to deal with disaster management and human rights, the state has no respect for human beings and no capacity to cope with crisis. This highlights clearly that both the LTTE and the GoSL have only one concern, and that is military strategy and gaining power over one another. The lives of people mean NOTHING to them.

The violence in Mavil Aru, Muttur and now Sampur is but a microcosm of what is to come in the next months if the military confrontation continues. . This 'limited war' has given rise to enormous consequences in terms of displacement, deaths, injuries and trauma. War in a large scale, so desired by various factions, will only increase the numbers

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Mutur: A betrayal of a community?

Mirak Raheem

The battle for Mutur is apparently over. As the state media proclaims "Government in Full Control of Mutur." Ironically, the military offensive for Maavil Aru that commenced on July 31st to open the sluice gates following the LTTE's following their closure by the Tigers that spilled over into a battle for Mutur continues as the fighting had not seem to be over in Eastern Trincomalee. The LTTE had announced that it had opened the sluice gates as a humanitarian gesture but it is not yet clear whether the two sides are willing to step down from their military posturing and violence. While military analysts and their arm chair counterparts debate, extol and critique the success of both sides' campaigns, the violence against the civilians during this last week of military and LTTE action has been presented as an unfortunate consequence, rather than the crime that it is.

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of civilian casualties in the future. If people, Muslims, Thamils and Sinhalese cannot stop war they should design new strategies to avoid the consequences of 'dirty war'. For example, Muslims and others in Muttur can declare that their area is a peace zone from which both armed forces should withdraw. People's committees can be formed to supervise it and a multi-ethnic police force can do policing in case of problems. People in the area can come to an agreement with two parties that both parties would not militarily intervene in Muttur. This is not a utopian idea since many countries give an example of the presence of peace zones in the midst of war.

This article is dedicated to the memory of fellow activist, friend and co-thinker, Kethesh (Ketheswaran Loganathan) ❑

The military analysts' version of the Battle for Mutur reads: on the 3rd day of the battle for Mavil Aru the LTTE launched a counter offensive against Army Camps around the Mutur Area. More than 200 LTTE cadres reportedly infiltrated Mutur taking control of key sections of the town, including the police station. The two sides fired shells at each other's positions with the Security forces maintaining an artillery barrage against the LTTE in Mutur Town and the surrounding areas including Sampur. Military propaganda from both sides declared that the town had been liberated, the strategic Mutur jetty was claimed by one side and then the other and with both sides blaming each other for shells that landed on civilian targets. Finally on the 5th, 3 days after the battle began it seemingly ended, as the government intensified its attacks and moved into secure control over the town and the LTTE made a strategic withdrawal from Mutur.

An alternate version of the Siege of Mutur reads: on August 2nd as the LTTE laid siege to the town and the government attempted to push the LTTE back, shells begin to hit the town its residents flee to mosques, schools and churches. The maternity unit of the Mutur District Hospital was hit by a shell, injuring scores of people and forcing the hospital to shut down. Over the successive days, a number of shells hit civilian targets including the Arabic College on August 3rd where civilians had sought shelter. 10 civilians were killed in the attack. The artillery barrage made civilian movement increasingly difficult, even to get basic supplies of food and water. The bodies of those killed could not be buried as their relatives and friends were too scared to step outside their shelters. The siege effectively shut off the town from humanitarian assistance, apart from a brief ceasefire to pull out some of the injured, and effectively trapped the residents within the town. On the second night of continuous shelling the Muslim civilians debated leaving en masse, on foot carrying a white flag. An eyewitness reports stated that a shell landed at approximately 6.20 a.m. at the Arabic College the next morning as if to confirm that flight from Mutur was the only option. Over the next 24 hours thousands of Mutur's residents fled south to Kantale.

Charges that need to be answered

While the urgency of the resulting humanitarian crisis demands immediate attention, the human rights abuses should not be ignored. There are some critical charges that need to be answered by the LTTE and the government.

- The LTTE attempted to infiltrate and capture Mutur despite the fact that it is a concentrated urban settlement, effectively making the civilians human shields.
- Some eye witnesses allege that the LTTE fired mortars close to civilian shelters such as schools and religious institutions, Did the LTTE launch artillery attacks from areas close to these shelters knowing full well that the security forces would retaliate? If so, they were deliberately trying to cause civilian casualties.
- The Government and the LTTE blame each other for the shells that hit civilian targets but both sides failed to end the shelling. Did neither side know the layout of the town, particularly the location of buildings such as schools and religious institutions which are always places for refuge during times of conflict, and are recognized as such by international humanitarian law and norms of human decency? Who fired the shells on the Arabic College?
- The residents of Mutur demanded a ceasefire, even as a temporary measure, so as to allow humanitarian assistance and key actors such as the ICRC and the SLMM into the town but the two sides were not willing to guarantee their safety. The killing of 17 humanitarian workers from Action Contre La Faim in a brutal manner has to be investigated and the culprits brought to justice.
- Given the casualties and the damages to property the victims need to

be compensated. Who will pay for it?

In addition to violating basic international norms and conventions governing armed conflict, both sides demonstrated a fundamental disregard for civilian life. They expect not to be held responsible and to use the cover of war to hide these violations. A question we all have to ask is – "Is the argument of military necessity and the collateral damage that it necessitates enough to justify the level of human suffering it has caused?" If we do care for the future of our country as a multicultural country respective of justice and co-existence, we as concerned citizens need to demand that an impartial commission be established to investigate the violence in and around Mutur. It needs to be stated that there are a number of ongoing investigations: the killing of the five youth in Trincomalee in January 2006, the killing and burning of 4 people in Pesalai in December 2005. The victims are waiting for justice.

'Humanitarian Wars,' Ethnic Cleansing and other Betrayals

The hysterical irony is that both sides insist they are fighting for humanitarian reasons. The suffering of one community is used to legitimize the brutalization of another, widening the cycle of violence and suffering. Taking the two sides' justification at face value and given the present context with each side taking great pains to explain that they remain committed to the ceasefire, the government and the LTTE have fundamentally betrayed the civilians whom they both claim to protect. For the Muslim Community of Mutur the battle has been a betrayal at multiple levels.

The LTTE when it entered Mutur told the community that it was fighting on their behalf and assured their safety. When the Muslim Community took the decision to leave south to Kantale, the LTTE said it would provide safe passage and even drinking water. Between the 3rd Mile Post and Pachanoor the LTTE cadres' behaviour abruptly changed- they began to verbally and physically abuse the civilians and demanded that the men should separate from the women and youth under 15. A masked man identified individuals from among the crowd, who were accused of being members of Jihad, and they were tied up by the LTTE. There are conflicting reports as to what happened next, with some stating that the LTTE began firing at the men. A shell landed in the vicinity reportedly killing some of the LTTE cadres and the fleeing Muslims. It is still unclear as to how many of the men were abducted by the LTTE, with rough estimates ranging from 30 to 60 and how many were killed in the explosion or shot by the LTTE.

For the Muslim Communities of Mutur and across the North East the LTTE's targeting of Mutur and the incident near Pachanoor have challenged the limited trust they have of the LTTE. Besides violating basic norms of international humanitarian law enshrined in the Geneva Convention, the LTTE's action especially at Pachanoor suggests that the guarantees it provides are meaningless. The Siege of Mutur has been presented by some as a continuation of its policy of ethnic cleansing. The precedent of the expulsion of the Northern Muslims who were forcibly expelled by the LTTE in 1990 and are still living in displacement is a stark reminder of the LTTE's approach to the 'Muslim problem.' On May 29th this year, notices appeared in Mutur demanding that the Muslims leave within 72 hours.

While the LTTE denied sending the notice, it failed to condemn it, raising suspicions of its underlying intentions. From this perspective, Mutur is a confirmation of the LTTE's overall strategy of creating a mono-ethnic Tamil Eelam, with the Muslims of the East facing the same fate as that of their northern counterparts. The fact of forcing the Mutur Community into displacement has sent ripples of fear across the East Coast Muslims as the Mutur Muslims was perceived to be a community that had created some sort of modus vivendi with the LTTE. Their safe return is thus a serious concern for all these other Muslim communities, not least for the Mutur Muslims who are presently living in the most pathetic situation.

That a Tamil-Muslim understanding needs to be forged at a political and social level for a final peace to be realized, especially in the East, is well recognized. Yet, over this peace process the LTTE has not responded in a consistent and adequate manner to address the basic fears of the Muslim community. The LTTE has seamlessly shifted from confidence building measures to harassment and human rights abuses; local LTTE leaders and cadres are given the freedom to carry out repressive policies in contravention of guarantees given by the LTTE leader while the LTTE leadership speaks of assurances and mutual coexistence.

The Government too has betrayed the Muslim Community. Like the residents of Kebetigollewa the people of Mutur are also asking where were the armed forces and the police that was meant to protect them. Muslims are reminded of other instances of state inaction as during the Valaichennai Communal violence of April 2003 when the armed forces stood by and watched as the bodies of Muslims killed in the violence were burnt in front of them. The expulsion of the northern Muslims in 1990 did not take place in just LTTE-controlled areas but also in Government held areas such as Mannar Island where the armed forces were not willing to provide security assurances to the communities there.

During the siege, the Muslims of Mutur appealed directly to the President through Muslim political leaders to stop the artillery barrage it wasof no avail. A question that arises is – would the Government have adopted such an approach if it was a Sinhala Community that was taken hostage? Instead, Muslims are forced to deal with the reality that they would be the target of both sides. The government response to the humanitarian crisis has also raised serious fears within the Muslim Community. Besides not taking measures to ensure humanitarian relief during the siege, the response to the mass exodus has been problematic at multiple levels. It was Muslim relief agencies and civil society groups that rushed in to provide immediate relief, while the INGOs and government agencies with their disaster preparedness manuals seem to have missed the glaring fact that there were more than 40,000 people who needed urgent relief for at least three days before the exodus took place. As seen with the tsunami disaster, government is increasingly divesting itself of imple-

mentation duties relating to relief. While efforts are being made to address this large scale crisis, the situation is still desperate – people sleeping under trees and by the roadside, 5 toilets for more than 4,000 people in one welfare camp, the list goes on. This situation needs to be addressed immediately but the needs of other displaced and affected communities in the North East should also be taken up.

The Government is sensitive to the concerns of the Sinhala Community of Kantale who are afraid that the displaced could become a semi-permanent population. It is keen to shift the Muslims to Kinniya, so that they can be among their own kind. Reports of two Muslims displaced killed in Kantale by an unknown group makes clear the security threats they continue to face.

The state needs to provide security for the displaced of all communities and mediate between local host communities and the displaced. The violence in Mutur and Thopur seem to be continuing with reports filtering of civilians still facing the threat of shells and bullets. Creating conditions for the return of Mutur's Muslims is also an urgent requirement, especially in the sphere of security. An immediate ceasefire needs to be negotiated to end the fighting and cannot be further delayed. The onus is on both parties to end the killings now.

Mutur is a stark example of the security and political dilemma of the Muslim Community in the North East. On one hand they have to face the LTTE policy towards them that wildly oscillates between engagement and brutality. These policies ignore and subvert the history of Tamil-Muslim coexistence and the reality of mutual dependency of the Muslim and Tamil communities. On the other the Muslims have to deal with a state as citizens who are meant to be provided protection but not left to be helpless during times of crisis. The response to this dilemma does not have one answer. Ensuring Muslim concerns at peace talks is essential and a separate Muslim delegation is just one to ensure that.

(The writer is a researcher at the Centre for Policy Alternatives, Colombo)

The on-going carnage the UN should worry about

"Given the complexities, there is only one hope: the UN. By adopting a step-by-step approach – calling for adherence to the ceasefire, appointing a special envoy and then working towards mediation and, if needs be, foreign peacekeepers – the nation has a glimmer of hope for peace. Without it, Sri Lanka's slide into anarchy will continue," the Asian Human Rights Commission said in a statement on 14 August 2006 which went on to say:

"Last week Hong Kong's South China Morning Post (SCMP) published an editorial entitled the 'UN should not ignore [the] Sri Lankan conflict' (August 8, 2006). The editorial wondered as to why despite the levels of violence in the Sri Lankan conflict being equal to, or worse when compared to Lebanon and other theatres of conflict, the attention shown by the United Nations or any other international forum is almost nil.

The essential moral and political issues involved in such a lack of expressed concern are allowing a massive carnage, displacement of people and other gross abuses of human rights to occur without challenge. In the absence of such a challenge the potential exists for even greater violence and anarchy.

The question is not one about who should take the blame for the present state of killings, losses and the bewilderment caused to the populations of the North and East as well as the people of the whole country. The crux of the matter is rather who can, and who should, stop it.

When it comes to the stopping of what is now called a "war" there is a complete absence of any agency that seems to be willing or capable of doing it. The government blames the LTTE for wanting the war and the LTTE on the other hand blames the government. There is nobody that the people can turn to that has the capacity to stand between the combatants and bring any forceful messages of peace, as are usually found in other conflicts. A call for peace is seen by the antagonists as acts of treachery in favour of one party or another.

This aspect of the absence of a peaceful solution is not new in the Sri Lankan conflict. In fact, ever since the mid 70s when the conflict intensified with a former president's order to a military commander to "stop the northern insurgency within three months", a fight to the finish psychology was entrenched in all the parties to the conflict, and this psychology has become much more deeply entrenched as time has gone by. Within this context even a ceasefire is seen as an opportunity for a period of intense preparation by both sides for a more violent stage of the war at any time in the future.

The result of all this is massive loss of life, generally estimated to be over 60,000 people and hundreds of thousands of families who have become displaced over the previous decades. In intensified periods of conflict, as we have at the moment, these numbers increase enormously. Short periods of 'peace' are not stable enough for such displaced persons to settle down again.

While the theatre of 'war' is the North and the East the entire country has been deeply transformed by this conflict. All law enforcement agencies have collapsed throughout the country making it one of the most dangerous lands to live in, or to invest in. Throughout the country the Sri Lankan police have proven to be an internally degenerated institution that the people have lost their confidence in. Assassinations have become something quite normal and threats of assassination are used in every form of social transaction making rationalized arrangements of living almost impossible. The symbol of all this is bullet riddled bodies scattered about over various places,

treated without any form of respect as deserving of a human being.

However, expressions of the horrors of the war mean nothing in the Sri Lankan context. It does not provoke outrage locally or internationally. Instead what seems to have emerged is a sense of helplessness and hopelessness expressed both locally and internationally.

It is from this point of view that the following conclusion in the SCMP's editorial mentioned above is relevant.

Given the complexities, there is only one hope: the UN. By adopting a step-by-step approach – calling for adherence to the ceasefire, appointing a special envoy and then working towards mediation and, if needs be, foreign peacekeepers – the nation has a glimmer of hope for peace. Without it, Sri Lanka's slide into anarchy will continue."

A UN response needed

In a further statement dated 17 August, the AHRC advocating a direct role of intervention in the case of Sri Lanka's worsening situation said, "While the call for a peaceful resolution of the Sri Lankan conflict has arisen from high level sources such as the Secretary General of the United Nations and even the Pope, these make hardly any difference to the dismal situation of complete neglect of the suffering caused to the people by all parties to the conflict. None of the reported incidents of killings following various attacks have been investigated. Indeed the one marked feature of the state of the killings over the last few weeks is the complete absence of credible inquiries. Even the international organisations are being prevented from conducting investigations and on some occasions the bodies are being cremated to prevent such investigations. International journalists associations have complained of the lack of access to the areas of conflict.

One of the groups that have been making desperate calls for protection is the Muslim community in the East. In the recent days of the conflict about 45,000 persons are said to have been displaced and many are dead or wounded. There are reports of accusations by the displaced persons who are demanding that the government and the LTTE must guarantee their absolute safety and security. As the discussions between these two parties have ceased there is no way that these displaced persons will have the common guarantee that they request. They have rejected unilateral declarations of protection as having hardly any meaning, as the recent violence has been perpetrated on them despite of such guarantees. According to reports the Muslim communities in the areas concerned are complaining of complete abandonment by all parties.

The plight of the Muslim community in the affected areas is a glaring example of the nature of the violence practiced by all parties to the conflict without any regard to any civilised norms of restraint or protection afforded to persons at times of serious conflict.

The international organisations that had earlier been playing the role of monitors, and at least keeping a head count of the dead and wounded, are now unable to perform their functions. The killing of 17 aid workers belonging to a French organisation working on tsunami relief is a clear indication of the absence of respect for the lives of anyone.

The degeneration of conflicts into such situations is not new in Sri Lanka. In 1971 when pockets of rebels attacked some places with Molotov cocktails and other rudimentary weapons a whole scale military campaign was launched which killed at least 10,000 people, mostly in the South of the country. No headcount was ever taken. Accept for a few incidents of individual cases of murder or rape the whole process of these large scale killings was never investigated. Once again in the South between 1987 and 1991 there was another killing on a large scale where huge numbers of people disappeared. Several commissions appointed many years later collected the names of around 30,000 persons. However, criminal investigations into these killings have never taken place except in a handful of individual cases. From 1977 until now a regular spate of killings has taken place the numbers of which are estimated to be more than 60,000 persons but no investigations of any significance have ever been conducted.

The concept of the complete extermination of opponents is now embedded in Sri Lanka as a permissible conduct to end conflicts. This approach of extermination, which is part of the unwritten conduct of the state in the times it considers moments of

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SLMM considering pulling out

August 14 - Accusing both the Government and the LTTE of using the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) as a political cover, the head of the cease-fire monitors has indicated willingness to withdraw the whole mission from the country, if both parties do not cease their "offensive operations."

"I recommended to Norway, to consider withdrawing the mission (SLMM) because, I can't see the need for it to function, if it is not used by the parties. So, why should we be here and sometimes, risk lives, when the parties don't want us. They just want us as a political cover. That's why they have not terminated the Cease-fire Agreement (CFA)," SLMM head Ulf Henricsson told the Colombo newspaper, *Daily Mirror*, in an interview.

The Swedish head, who in any case may have to pull out by the end of this month, to keep in line with an LTTE demand for EU monitors to leave, says the final decision of withdrawing the whole team lies with the Norwegian facilitators, adding that the two warring parties have been warned of such a possibility.

"The Government and the LTTE don't want us to leave. But that is the normal case. They want us when they can use us and they don't want us when we say something unpleasant about them. They take the pros but not the cons. Both parties are very happy when I rule against the other," he said.

The SLMM head further said that he has ruled the Government military operation in Mavil Aru and the ensuing air attacks on rebel targets as an "offensive" and not a "humanitarian operation" or defensive operation, as termed by the Government. "They talk about humanitarian operation or defensive air strikes...I rule it as military offensive operations. They may think whatever they want. I have a problem to see air strikes as a defensive operation. Of course, you are fighting your enemy and the Government feels the whole operation right now is defensive. But that is not my view on it, at least not according to the CFA," the SLMM head said.

He further noted that even the LTTE claim that it was also carrying out defensive operations on their part was not acceptable, as the their attacks were also "offensives", according to the CFA.

Prior to the re-opening of the Mavil Aru anicut last week, Mr. Henrikssen attempted to visit the site with the LTTE Trincomalee political leadership on August 6, to monitor its re-opening, after the rebels agreed to the move, following talks with the Norwegian facilitators. However, the SLMM head could not go all the way as the Air Force launched fresh raids near the anicut, just minutes before he could reach the site, forcing him to take cover and the LTTE to reconsider its decision to open the sluice gates.

The Government, later, said it was not aware of Mr. Henricsson's presence in the area but the SLMM head says he has ample evidence to prove the Government was informed of his intention to visit the site, well in advance.

"The government knew I was in the area, with the intention of going with the LTTE to check if they were opening the water. I still have the SMS on that, as we have emails and we have a response on that. I talked to the Peace Secretariat and the General responsible in the area. So, the Government knew exactly what we were doing," Mr. Henricsson said firmly.

The SLMM head says, in his view, both parties are committed to talks on their own conditions and are not willing to compromise, which is leading to their own demise and in turn, victimising innocent civilians.

Concerned about current situation

Aug 17 - The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission said they regret about the current situation in Sri Lanka which diplomats are being killed and targeted with firearms and bombs. The Mission's spokesperson Thornfinnur Omarson said they are concerned about the situation.

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crisis, has caused equally repugnant retaliation on the part of the rebel groups. The former president, Jayawardene characterised this as a killing match.

There are no internal mechanisms available within the Sri Lankan legal system to bring about any form of restraint under the circumstances that are being experienced now. There is nothing to stop the carnage, displacement and the resultant collapse of all institutions of law and order.

When in Nepal a situation of great danger arose in February 2005 with the possibility of large scale massacres by different parties to the conflict, the United Nations sent a special human rights monitoring mission. The result of this mission was to reduce the heights of violence and to make possible a democratic solution to the problem. In fact such a solution emerged within just one year of the UN intervention which provided space for the peace loving masses to assert themselves against all warring parties, including the king himself. This initiative in Nepal arose as an expression of the unwillingness of the international community to watch a carnage taking place before their eyes.

A heavy responsibility lies with the United Nations to find a way to save lives in the moment of crisis that is now taking place in Sri Lanka. How such a diplomatic solution can be developed is something that the Secretary General and his advisors must discover.

About AHRC: The Asian Human Rights Commission is a regional non-governmental organisation monitoring and lobbying human rights issues in Asia. The Hong Kong-based group was founded in 1984.

He said their monitors had gone to the scene of bomb blast at Dharmapala Mawatha, Kollupitiya. "We are presently conducting inquiries into the assassination of Kethesh Loganathan (Deputy Secretary General of Peace Secretariat) and the incident at Kollupitiya," Omarson said.

He categorically condemned the two incidents, and said they were yet to ascertain whether the attempt was made on the life of Pakistan High Commissioner in Sri Lanka or not. He declined to comment on the perpetrators behind the two incidents saying, "the SLMM is yet to ascertain the perpetrators. The inquiries are in progress," he said.

Asked if the SLMM had to put the blame on any party over the current upsurge of violence in the country, whom they would blame, Omar said, "All we can say is we have been saying to both the LTTE and the Government that there will be no solution to the conflict if the parties continue with military action."

"We have said there is no military solution to the problem. Ultimately the country will suffer as a result," he said.

Asked the SLMM whether the killing of Loganathan was an act that may be categorised under military means, Omarson said they had already communicated a statement on the killing of Loganathan. "There are no words strong enough to condemn this vicious cold blooded murder of yet another statesman who lived for peace."

Monitors quit Trinco

August 18 - Monitors of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) posted in the Trincomalee district left for Colombo Thursday (17) morning as the ground situation was not conducive for further monitoring. Trincomalee SLMM office located along the Inner Harbour Road in the east port town was closed down Wednesday and all six monitors led by SLMM Head of Trincomalee District Office (DO) Ove Janssen, left by road to Colombo, SLMM sources said.

"Due to the unstable situation, SLMM Head of Mission decided to implement the first phase of SLMM Security Plan restricting movements," Major General Ulf Henricsson, Head of Mission (HoM) SLMM, said last week.

"We are constantly evaluating the developments and are prepared to evacuate monitors away from the conflict areas," he said.

"Measures have also been taken to improve the security at SLMM premises by constructing shelters. Due to the limitations for SLMM to perform its mandated tasks and the deteriorating security situations it is possible that all SLMM monitors will be withdrawn to Colombo next week before the possibilities to travel are restricted even further."

SLMM monitors in Trincomalee had been staying in a hotel located at Nilaveli, about sixteen km off north of Trincomalee on Trincomalee-Pulmoddai road.

SLMM monitors had taken the decision to close down the Trincomalee office and to leave for Colombo following an attack on Sri Lanka Navy sentry at the Pillaikulam Bridge junction at the entrance to Sampaltivu village, about 7 km north of Trincomalee town, around 10.30 p.m., on Wednesday.

The SLN sentry point is located between Nilaveli and Trincomalee town. SLMM monitors staying in a hotel in Nilaveli area had to pass through this SLN sentry point to report to the SLMM office in Trincomalee town, sources said.

SLMM District Offices (DO) are operated in the six district-capitals, Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara in the NorthEast.

Each District has established a Local Monitoring Committee. The committee consists of five members, two appointed by GOSL, two by the LTTE and one SLMM monitor, the chairman.

The mission also operated six Points of Contact (POC) in Delft, Point Pedro, Silavatturai, Muthur, Killinochchi, Valaichchenai and Akkaraipattu.

Earlier, the SLMM Naval Monitoring Teams in Jaffna and Trincomalee were forced to temporarily suspend their monitoring and patrol as the parties engaged in hostile acts in the sea following an unresolved sea-dispute between the parties on Sea Tiger vessel movement.

SLMM Headquarters is located in Colombo and it maintains a Liaison Office to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Kilinochchi. ❑

Norway urges 'cessation of hostilities'

August 02 - Peace facilitator Norway said that the intensive military operations by the LTTE and the government of Sri Lanka had resulted in 'deadlock' and could easily escalate the armed conflict. The first statement issued by Oslo came one week after fighting escalated between government forces and Tamil Tigers.. It called on both sides cease hostilities and withdraw to their prior positions.

The full text of the statement follows: "Norway urges immediate cessation of hostilities in Sri Lanka During the past few days, the parties to the Sri Lanka Ceasefire Agreement, the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), have engaged in intensive military operations following the LTTE's closure of the water supply from the LTTE-controlled area to the government-controlled area. The situation is deadlocked and could easily lead to an escalation of the armed conflict. The hostilities violate the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement.

"Norway urges the immediate cessation of hostilities on both sides in order to pave the way for negotiations aimed at resolving the water dispute. The LTTE must reopen the water supply to prevent further civil-

(continued on next page)

ian suffering and damage to crops, and both parties' military forces must withdraw to the positions they held when they entered into the Ceasefire Agreement in 2002," said Minister of International Development Erik Solheim.

The escalation of the conflict coincides with the deterioration of the situation of the civilian Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM). The LTTE has refused to cooperate with Danish, Finish and Swedish monitors since the EU included the LTTE in its list of terror groups earlier this year. On 3 August Special Envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer will make a long-planned visit to Sri Lanka for talks with the parties.

"I am sending Hanssen-Bauer to Sri Lanka to discuss the future of the SLMM with both parties. The SLMM monitors from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway have done and are doing a great job in these difficult times. Their efforts have undoubtedly been decisive in getting the parties to respect the Ceasefire Agreement," said Mr Solheim.

Karuna faction opens office in Colombo:

August 10 - The political arm of the Karuna faction, the Thamil Makkal Viduthalai Pullikal (TMVP), opened its first political office in Colombo 9 August amid tight security. As police checked vehicles entering Schofield Place in Kollupitiya, where the TMVP office is located some tension prevailed in the area with even media persons covering the event having to undergo body checks by unarmed TMVP cadres.

TMVP spokesman Mr. Thuyavan declared open the new office by unveiling the party name board followed by multi-religious ceremonies and a speech by the Batticaloa political office head Mr. Pratheep.

Mr. Pratheep said the TMVP faction which operated a political and military wing would contest the next parliamentary elections in the North and East with the sole intention of accomplishing its 7-point political agenda.

"Due to the elimination of Tamil intellectuals, politicians and the terrorization of opponents in Sri Lanka a political vacuum had been created and the TMVP accepted the responsibility of providing political leadership to the Tamil people of Sri Lanka. Hence all the people and the diaspora who genuinely feel they can contribute to this cause are to be accommodated," Mr. Pratheep said.

The TMVP is registered as a political party in Sri Lanka. The party opened its first office in Batticaloa two months ago.

India won't reconsider ban on LTTE

CHENNAI, August 10- : India's National security adviser M K Narayanan has said the Central government would not reconsider the ban imposed on the LTTE and that there would be no direct intervention in the Sri Lankan crisis. After a meeting with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi, Mr. Narayanan said, "I don't think the government of India has any doubt about the ban on the LTTE. We regard the LTTE as a dangerous organisation and the ban is necessary."

He was responding to a question on the Chief Minister's recent comment that the ban on the terror group was 'debatable'. He said the government was clear about no direct intervention in Sri Lanka, but would remain in the loop by using "all persuasion possible" to push the Lankan government to find an early solution to the ethnic crisis.

"So far our position is that we are not directly involved. However, India is an important factor and Sri Lanka is sensitive about our concerns. But as far as that is concerned, after our last experience with the LTTE, we do not want to get involved directly," Mr. Narayanan said.

Clarifying that there was complete unanimity between the Centre and state government on Indian foreign policy towards Sri Lanka, he said, "I told the Chief Minister how we told Sri Lankan foreign minister Mangala Samaraweera about our position — the importance of safety and security of the Tamils, devolution of powers and distinction between LTTE and other Tamils."

US: No military solution to the conflict

August 11 - The US Embassy in Sri Lanka, in a press release issued on Friday (11) said there can be "no military solution to the conflict that continues to divide Sri Lankans. Without political commitment and a spirit of compromise between both parties, there will be no end to the conflict. "There is no other way forward than through a return to negotiations." The United States is "deeply concerned by the dislocation of tens of thousands of innocent civilians and the killing of NGO personnel in the northeast." The following is the full text of the US press release:

"The events of the past weeks demonstrate again that there can be no military solution to the conflict that continues to divide Sri Lankans. The people of Sri Lanka need and deserve peace. The United States is deeply concerned by the dislocation of tens of thousands of innocent civilians and the killing of NGO personnel in the northeast.

We call on the LTTE to return to political negotiations and to renounce terrorism. At the same time, we look to the Government of Sri Lanka to address the legitimate grievances of Tamil-speaking people and to respond to incidents of violence against civilians with prompt, independent investigations. Without political commitment and a spirit of compromise between both parties, there will be no end to the conflict. There is no other way forward than through a return to negotiations."

A tribute to Kadirgamar

August 10 - The Sri Lanka Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies has been renamed after Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies to pursue his vision, on the eve of his first death anniversary. Kadirgamar was assassinated buy a suspected LTTE sniper on August 12, 2005.

The Institute was the brainchild of the late Foreign Minister, who felt the need of a multidisciplinary research forum dedicated to analyzing

Sri Lanka's strategic interests in the contemporary global and domestic context, made a proposal to the Cabinet in 2000 to initiate such a facility.

Following his death, President Mahinda Rajapaksa who was the then Prime Minister, proposed that the Institute be named after Kadirgamar considering his monumental service to the country. The Institution fills a huge vacuum that existed in the country for an independent forum that could generate research to contribute to national policy formulation. The institute in addition to carrying out policy research would also function as a forum where policy makers, academics and practitioners of diplomacy and foreign relations can meet and develop ideas. The identified areas of research were to include among others, National security, Peace building, strategic interests, post conflict scenarios and so forth.

Professor of International Relations at Oxford and member of International Institution of Strategic Studies, Professor Adam Roberts, paid a glowing tribute to his late friend.

He observed Kadirgamar's efforts which won unreserved fame and admiration in the international circuit. "Tall Trees are the ones that capture the wind," Roberts said.

A stamp was issued in honour of the late Minister with Minister of Posts and Telecommunications D.M. Jayaratne handing the first day cover to the Prime Minister. The inauguration was attended by Ministers, diplomats, Foreign dignitaries, Scholars and senior military officers.

Annan expresses 'profound concern'

August 14 - U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed concern on Monday (14) over the ongoing violence in northeast Sri Lanka - that reportedly killed dozens of students.

Annan is "profoundly concerned at the rising death toll, including the seven people killed in a bomb attack in Colombo today, and reports of dozens of students killed in a school as a result of air strikes in the North-East," according to a statement.

He also deplores the assassination over the weekend of Ketheshwaran Loganathan, deputy secretary general of the Government Peace Secretariat and veteran Tamil human rights advocate, it said.

Annan called on the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to allow humanitarian agencies free and unimpeded access to the affected population and allow the civilian population to leave the contested areas.

Norway urges 'cessation of hostilities'

August 02 - Peace facilitator Norway said that the intensive military operations by the LTTE and the government of Sri Lanka had resulted in 'deadlock' and could easily escalate the armed conflict. The first statement issued by Oslo came one week after fighting escalated between government forces and Tamil Tigers.. It called on both sides cease hostilities and withdraw to their prior positions.

The full text of the statement follows: "Norway urges immediate cessation of hostilities in Sri Lanka During the past few days, the parties to the Sri Lanka Ceasefire Agreement, the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), have engaged in intensive military operations following the LTTE's closure of the water supply from the LTTE-controlled area to the government-controlled area. The situation is deadlocked and could easily lead to an escalation of the armed conflict. The hostilities violate the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement.

"Norway urges the immediate cessation of hostilities on both sides in order to pave the way for negotiations aimed at resolving the water dispute. The LTTE must reopen the water supply to prevent further civilian suffering and damage to crops, and both parties' military forces must withdraw to the positions they held when they entered into the Ceasefire Agreement in 2002," said Minister of International Development Erik Solheim.

The escalation of the conflict coincides with the deterioration of the situation of the civilian Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM). The LTTE has refused to cooperate with Danish, Finish and Swedish monitors since the EU included the LTTE in its list of terror groups earlier this year. On 3 August Special Envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer will make a long-planned visit to Sri Lanka for talks with the parties.

"I am sending Hanssen-Bauer to Sri Lanka to discuss the future of the SLMM with both parties. The SLMM monitors from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway have done and are doing a great job in these difficult times. Their efforts have undoubtedly been decisive in getting the parties to respect the Ceasefire Agreement," said Mr Solheim.

Canada's concern over escalation of hostilities

August 16 - Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Peter MacKay, in a statement on Tuesday (15) expressed concern regarding the escalation of hostilities in Sri Lanka. "Canada is concerned by the escalation of hostilities in Sri Lanka between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). We call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a return to negotiations," he said in his statement. "Canada believes that there can be no military solution to this lengthy conflict. Peace can only be achieved when all parties desist from violence and intimidation and seek a resolution to the conflict through negotiation. Canada continues to actively support the efforts of the co-chairs of the Tokyo Donor Conference in support of the Sri Lankan peace process, as well as the indispensable work of the Norwegian facilitator," he further said in his statement. ❑

A tribute to Kadirgamar

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(continued on page 41)

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British father *seeks professional bridegroom in UK/USA/Canada for professional daughter, B.A.(1st.), 25, 5'3", contact +44 208569 0705. (M 1485)*

Jaffna Hindu professional parents *seek groom preferably doctor/dentist for their doctor daughter, 27, 5'4", fair, Mars afflicted in eighth house. Please send horoscope, details to M 1486 c/o Tamil Times.*

IN MEMORIAMS

Third Anniversary Remembrance

8th August 2006

Mrs Poo Sivasubramaniam
(1929 – 2003)

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by family and friends

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Fifth Year Remembrance

Dr. Chelvadurai Manogaran
(1935 – 2001)
Emeritus Professor of Geography, University of Wisconsin-Parkside, USA.

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by his beloved wife Santhana Thevi (Kili); daughters Shakila Shimp and Anita Langewisch Manogaran; sons-in-law Douglas Shimp and Matthew Langewisch; grandchildren Nathaniel and Kiran Shimp, family and friends.

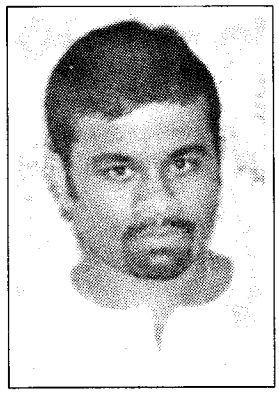
Second Year Remembrance

Mr. Thirunavukkarasu Nadesamoorthy B.Sc.; M.Sc.; C. Eng.; M.I.Struct.E.; M.C.I.O.B.; M.C.I.Arb; F.G.S.; *former Principal Consultant Civil Engineer, Foster Wheeler Energy Ltd.; Shinfield Park, Reading, Berks RG2 9FM, UK; son of late Arunasalam Thirunavukkarasu and Parvathipillai of Atchu-valey, Jaffna passed away on 6th August 2004*

Remembered with love and affection by his beloved wife Vijeyaluxmi on the second anniversary of his passing away.

Tenth Anniversary Remembrance

22nd August 2006



In ever loving memory of **Mr. Selvarajah Kiritharan.**
Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his loving parents, Mr. & Mrs Selvarajah (UK); brother Muraleedaran and sister-in-law Dr. Sukanya (Australia); sister Dr. Subathini and brother-in-law Ramesh (Jaffna); sister Shanthini and brother-in-law Shanmuganathan (UK); sister Shamini and brother-in-law Uthayakumaran (UK); uncles, aunts. other relatives and friends.

Your Memories are always with us.

- 63 Elm Croft Crescent, North Harrow, Middlesex HA2 6HL Tel: 0208 863 6768.

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WWW.srilankans.com

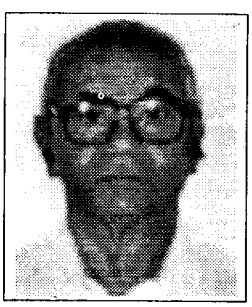
First Year Remembrance

In loving memory of **Mr Sinnathurai Mahalingam**, *born on 01/02/1912, (Former Vice-Principal, Jaffna Central College) on the First Anniversary of his passing away on 23rd August 2005.*

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by his daughters Mrs Lalitha Dilkushi Karunakaran and Miss. Priyadarshini Damayanthy; sons Premkumar, Mohankumar, Ranjitkumar, Nimalkumar and Tilakkumar. sons-in-law Karunakaran and Thirunavukarasu; daughters-in-law Kamalarani, Vijayaluxmi, Nirmala, Yasothara and Nalini; grandchildren Kishore, Mathan, Anjaana, Roshaan, Sathiya, Poornima, Shameela, Mano, Vinithra, Pradeep, Tilna, Durga, Niruthan and Nivetha and great grandchildren Adam, Ishaan and Ayesha. His beloved wife Poornambihai Ambal and loving daughter Mrs Ranjini Geetanjali Thirunavukarasu predeceased him on 5th June 1994 and 24th May 1996 respectively. Our loving memories of them are deep in our hearts.

– M.Ranjitkumar,
12 Chase Lane, Barkingside, Essex IG6 1BH.
Tel: 020 8518 5759.

Fourth Anniversary Remembrance



In ever loving memory of **Mr. Sinnathamby Sivapiragasam** *of Sandilipay, formerly of Irrigation Department, Colombo on the fourth anniversary of his passing away on 23rd August 2002.(20th August according to the Hindu calendar.)*

Fondly remembered and sadly missed by his children Radha, Sivakumaran, Rajini, Ramini, Rohini and Renuka; daughter-in-law Navamani; sons-in-law Viswanathan, Dr. Salama and Umasuthan; grandchildren Sivaruby & Siva-yogi, Krishnakumar & Ahilan, Shireen, Vidya & Menaha, Jenani & Richard; great granddaughters Yalini and Leela, Maya and sister Kanmani.

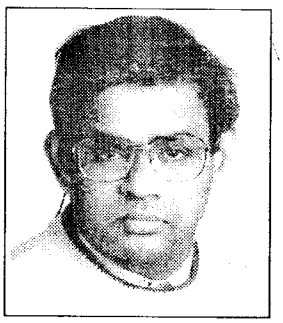
-10 Orchard Court, Worcester Park,
Surrey KT4 7LD.
Tel: 0208 330 6722.

Sixth Anniversary Remembrance

In loving memory of ***Mrs Amirtharanee Ratnasingham*** *on the sixth anniversary of her passing away on 21st August 2005.*

Deep in our hearts your memory lives on
As well as that of your son.

First Anniversary Remembrance



If my tears could bring you back
I would still hear your voice calling Sinamma
The pain and anguish only God can heal
Fond memories of you Kumaran!
No one can steal.

Birth: 18.08.1953
Rest: 1.09.2005

Doctor Shanthi Kumaran Ratnasingham, *Retd. Staff Associate Specialist in Anaesthesia in Royal Infirmary Hospital, Edinburgh*

A year has passed with lightning speed
Since the sad day when my Kumaran was called away.
If I could have saved you, you never would have passed away
To live with my grief, so hard I try

Thank you Lord for the loved one whom you blessed with great intellect and humour. Affectionately remembered and profoundly missed by Thevaranee and other members of the family.

Thevaranee wishes to express her sincere thanks to all those who helped and supported her at the time of the bereavement and those friends and classmates of Kumaran who have contributed towards the purchase of a computer for the Jaffna Hospital.

- Miss. J.T.Rasiah,
64 Jessup Close, London.

Third Year Remembrance

In loving remembrance of **Mr. Chellappah Balasingam** *on the third anniversary of his passing away on the 10th August 2003.*

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his beloved wife Balasaraswathy; loving children Ragulan, Renuka (both of UK), Ravichandran (Chennai, India), Ragavan and Rathika (both of UK); sons-in-law Shriananda and Rajaloganathan; daughters-in-law Sujatha, Shantha and Shankari; grandchildren Hariharan, Rishiharan, Sinduja, Bhairavi, Sriram, Piranavan and Lakshmanan.

- 3A The Drive, Northwood,
Middlesex HA6 1HQ.
Tel: 01923842275.

Anniversary Remembrance

Mr.Mayilvaganam Velummylum *J.P., U.M., Attorney-at-Law and former Chairman, Urban Council, Point Pedro passed away on 31.8.89 and the seventeenth anniversary of his passing away falls on 31st August 2006.*

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by his loving wife; children Thayanandarajah (UK), Nithianandarajah (New Zealand), Mayilvaganarajah (UK),- Chitra (Colombo), Anandarajah, Krishnarajah and Jayanthi (all of Chennai); grandsons Cameron, Ewan and Atharsan; son-in-law Kamaleswaran (Colombo); daughters-in-law Sumitra (UK), Devi (New Zealand), relations, friends and a host of grateful constituents

– 'Hillcroft', 14 Howards Wood Drive, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 7HN.

Annversary Remembrance

Mr. Apputhurai Gunaratnam

In loving memory of ***Mr. Apputhurai Gunaratnam,*** *former Divisional Supertendent of Post Offices, Sri Lanka on the sixteenth anniversary of his passing away on 28th August 1990.*

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his loving wife Rani; children Thirukumar (Australia), Vasuki (Sri Lanka), Devaki (Australia), Sutharsan (UK), Sarathadevi (California); sons-in-law Ravindran, Radhakrishnan and Sashikanth; daughters-in-law Vasanthi and Suzanne; grandchildren Ashvini, Yathurshini, Prushoth, Mayurikka and Mayuran.

- 1 Appin Court, Roxborough Park, Harrow-on-the-Hill, Middx HA2 0KQ.

Forthcoming Events

September

03 *11 a.m. to 3 p.m.: Paris Ganesh Temple Eleventh Annual Chariot (Ther) Festival. For details Tel: 00331 4209 5045; Avani Sunday (3)*

04 *8 a.m. Paris Ganesh Temple: Theertham Festival, Sangapisegam and Thiruvunjal; Eekathasi*

05 *Pirathosam; Avani Oonam*

07 *Full Moon*

10 *Sankadakara Sathu-rthi; Aavani Sunday (4)*

12 *Karthigai*

13 *Shri Krishna Jayanthi*

14 *Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross*

17 *Eekathasi*

19 *Pirathosam*

21 *Amavasai; Feast of St. Mathew*

23 *Navarathiri starts; Puradasu Sani(1)*

26 *Sathurthi; Luxmy Pooja starts*

27 *Fease of St. Vincent de Paul*

28 *Shashti*

29 *Saraswathy Pooja starts*

30 *Puradasi Sani (2); Feast of St. Jerome*

At Bhavan Centre, 4A Castle town Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 0207 381 3086/4608. Website: www.bhavan.net.

Sept 2nd 2-5 p.m. *Talk by Overseas Academicians* ***Dr.Subesh Kak & Dr. S.Navaratna Rajaram.*** *All welcome.*

Sept. 16th 6.30 p.m. *Navaras presents* ***Sitar & Hindustan Vocal Concert.*** ***Sanjeev Chimalgi*** *(Hindustan Vocal);* ***Ustad Sujat Khan*** *(Sitar);* ***Yogesh Shamsi*** *(Tabla);* ***Sudhir Nayaka*** *(Harmonium)*

Sept.30th 6 p.m. Durgashtami Puja *All Welcome.*

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent wedding.

Chenduran*, son of Mrs Kamala Devi & Dr. Chellappah Shanmuganathan of 146, Ridge Lane, Watford, Herts WD17 4WU and* ***Martina,*** *daughter of Mrs Hana Piskata & Mr. Slavomur Piskatty of Janacka 949, Paradubice 53012, Czech Republic on 18th August 2006 at the VIP Lounge, 47, High Street, Edgware, Middx.*

Bamini, *daughter of Mr. & Mrs Balasingam of 46 Highlands Gdns, Ilford, Essex IGI 3LD and* ***Mahilrajan,*** *son of Mrs. R. Mylvaganam of 6, Rue des Jardins, 94240 L'hay les Roses, France on 20th August 2006 at The Old Town Hall, 29 The Broadway, London E15 4BQ.*

Saravana, *son of Dr. & Mrs Rajan Namasivayam of 2, Balmoral Gdns, Croydon Surrey CR2 0HN and* ***Vanee,*** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Rajadurai Anpananthar of 146 Shelley Ave, Manor Park, London E12 6PU on 27th August 2006 at The Platinum Suite, ExCel,, Docklands, London E16 1XL.*

Branavan, *son Drs Kandiah & Shanthy Sivakumar of 7 Gossington Close, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 6TG and* ***Hannah,*** *daughter of Mic hael & Elaine Neale of East end Farm, Grovesend Road, Thornbury, South Glos., BS 35 2HB. on 27th August 2006 at Lindley Hall, 80 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PE.*

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Book Review

"THE FOOTFALLS ON TIME"

by Justice C.V.Wigneswaran,
Retired Judge of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka.

('The Foorfalls on Time' was recently launched in remembrance of the late Yogendra Duraiswamy by his widow and author,Mrs. Sivanandi Duraiswamy)

Minstrel saintess Auvaiyar was asked by Muruga, the Warrior God of the Tamils, as to what was the greatest in this world. She replied in chaste Tamil "Peridhu peridh puvanam peridhu" which rendered into English runs thus -

"Great indeed this vast wide world,
Yet it lies light on the head of serpent bold,
(Goddess) Uma wears on little finger serpent akin ring gold,
Goddess herself an adjunct in Lord Shiva's hold,
Shiva resides in hearts of devotees of divine mould,
Greatness of devotees in fact is too great to be told."

Mrs. Sivanandini Duraiswamy has ventured to describe the biographies of eighteen personifications of greatness - ancient, medieval and modern, Indian and Sri Lankan from the Hindu fold, in her latest publication "The Footfalls on Time".

Starting with ancient Thirumoolar and followed by Karaikkal Arnmaiyar she describes in Part I the lives of the three more famous Nayanmars (Appar, Sundarar and Sambandar) and then Maniccavasagar. Also Serkkilar who wrote inter alia their biographies in the Periya Puranam, the more recent Pattinaththar and Thayumanavar and the Sri Lankan sages of yester - century Yogaswami and Swami Vipulananthar find a place.

Part II of her book examines the lives of the young and brilliant Adhi Shankarar followed by God intoxicated Mirabhai, musical maestro Tyagarajar, Holy Mother Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda, RabindranathTagore and Swami Chinmayananda.

The catalyst that inspired her to undertake such a task seems to be some young pilgrims from the West, thirsty for knowledge about the mysticism of the Indian ethos, whom she met in Madurai in South India years ago in the company of her late husband Mr. Yogendra Duraiswamy.

The core of mysticism is the quest for communion with the Sacred. Hinduism from time immemorial had recommended different paths in order to unfold the mysteries of life and to imbibe the Sacred. The ancient saints and sages were tremendously interested in the art of living. They probed into their relationships with innumerable expressions of life surrounding them, they watched carefully the inner drama taking place in themselves both on the biological as well as the psychological levels, in the waking state, dream state and deep sleep state.

They came up with paths broadly probing into life at an intellectual level (Gnana), physical level (Karma), emotional level (Bhakti) and spiritual level (Dhyana). These paths took their votaries away from mere mundane enjoyment of life to probe further into the recesses of their beings to face up with something which exceeded themselves.

The saints and sages mentioned in "The Footfalls on Time" could be classified as having belonged to these different paths or margas. While Adhi Shankarar is reputed to have been a Gnana Yogi (man of wisdom) his life had glimpses of a Karma Yogi as well as Bhakthi Yogi illustrating the fact that these paths can overlap. Page 163 of "The Footfalls on Time" refers to the famous Bhaja Govindam composition which exhorted a student of religion not to waste his time on the rules of grammar but to seek Govinda (the Lord) with his heart. Shankarar realised that heart was the doorway to heavenly bliss. Many saints and sages mentioned in the Book including the Nayanmars and Mirabhai were great Bhathars or devotee of the Divine singing their hymns with great devotion, deriving emotional fulfilment and in the process a glimpse of the Divine.

Holy Mother, after the passing away of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa considered duty and dhyana as her foremost mission in life. She followed the Karma marga but with little fanfare. Swami Vivekananda did his duties as a man of dynamism and action. Swami Chinmayananda spent his life transforming himself into a conduit pipe to propagate the ancient Vedic wisdom to the common man. He followed the path of wisdom and dhyana.

Yet bhakthi remains the most captivating path that enthralls the modern man. In a world which is mesmerised by scientific outputs, where knowledge, reason and materialistic attitudes loom large, dipping deep into our hearts gives us a much wanted recreative recess and relaxation. The ideal marga or path recommended for the modern human being is the path of devotion or bhakti. Leafing through the lives of great bhaktas infects us with their devotion, enthusiasm and enriching experiences.

Sivanandini has therefore selected a majority of great bhaktas as those who left an indelible mark on the sands of history - 'The Footfalls on Time'. Biographies of this nature in English fulfil a crying need among many Hindus and others today who have difficulties with their mother tongues, though keen on knowing about great saints and sages of yore.

It is said that in South Africa, Mauritius and elsewhere, the progeny of Tamil Hindus transliterate the Thevarams in English and sing them reading from the English version due to their ignorance of the Tamil script in which Thevarams were composed and sung.There are English speaking Hindus who do not have an opportunity nor a necessity to study Tamil but keen on professing their traditional religion. Hinduism is a well formulated scientifically acceptable deep and profound religion which has developed through the inputs of great saints, sages and savants qualifying to be called Sanatana Dharma - the perennial truth, the youngsters have grown to understand. And this book is precisely what they would need.

Some of the more famous torch bearers of this ancient religion find their biographies described in 'The Footfalls on Time'. The book is not merely a biographical sketch. It also discusses philosophical concepts and truths. It would make good reading to those amongst us who are Anglophiles whether Tamils or non Tamils. The language is romantic, picturesque and imaginative. The style of writing brings nostalgic memories of a by gone age appropriate no doubt to the personalities whose lives are examined. The book would no doubt be popular among discerning connoisseurs of mystical literatu

('Footfalls on Time' can be purchased from the publishers Vijitha Yapa Bookshop from their website www.vijithayapa.com. The price in UK is £8.50 and in the USA $ 16.50)

Lions Club Paradise Seychelles donates to elderly

The newly launched Lions Club Paradise Seychelles has made donations to two institutions for the elderly.

Following a donation of men's wear to the elderly of the North East Point Regional Home, the club donated six standing fans to the English River Old People's Home. The fans have been sponsored by G.S. Pillay & Company and Abhaye Valabhjired.

The set of shirts and trousers was handed over to the director of Hospital Administration, Marie-Ange Denis, by the president of the Lions Club Paradise Seychelles, V. Sivasupramanian, who said that the club's commitment is "towards the elderly, the sick and the youths."

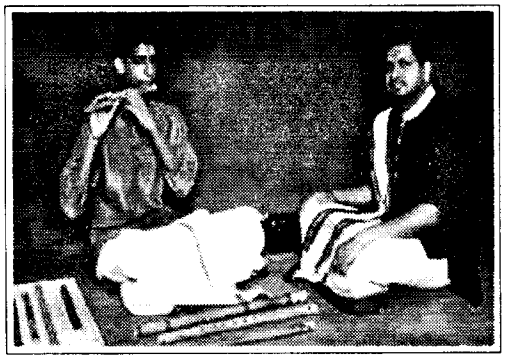
Accepting the set of clothing in the presence of the Minster for Health and Social Services, Vincent Meriton, and the principal secretaries for Health and Social Services, Jessie Esparon and Marie-Antoinette Alexis respectively, Mrs Denis thanked the club for its support. She said it was always very encouraging to receive any kind of support in this day and age "where people concentrate only on their personal benefits." There are currently 92 men and 42 women residing at the North East Point Regional Home.

Accepting the fans from Mr Sivasupramanian during the ceremony at the English River Old People's Home, the district's administrator, Andrea Mounac, thanked the two sponsors and the Lions Club Paradise of Seychelles "for the much awaited donation" which he said would surely bring more comfort to the residents.

For his part, Mr Sivasupramanian said he was very happy to make the donation, as a first step in the club's mission to help in the promotion of better living conditions among people in the community. He also called on other organisations to help for the betterment of the lives of the less fortunate in the community.

The ceremony was attended by members of other clubs as well as residents of the home.

A Professional Performance



The Flute Recital of Yatheesan, son of Dr. and Mrs Selvakumar and disciple of Sri. P.Gnanavarathan took place on 15th July 2006, when he ascended the Beck Theatre stage at Hayes. According to the brochure the main item was 'Ragam, Thanam and Pallavi' in Dwiragam. My past experience has been often that when the debutante plays, the ragam gets quite distorted. It needs a lot of experience and imagination to play a ragam. Very rarely have I heard a near perfect raga Alapana. Hence I was very anxious to listen how the two ragas would come out of the flute that night.

*The concert started very punctually and the moment Yatheesan pressed the flute against his lips, the music started to **flow**. Within minutes of his Natakurinchi varnam my anxiety vanished. Abohi, Golai, Hamsanadham and Kamboji followed one after the other like the planes landing at the nearby Heathrow airport. The raga alapana and the kalpana swaras came effortlessly. 'Nannu Palimba', gem of a composition from Sri Thiagarajah Swami came next. Sri Thiagarajah **saw** the picture of Sri Rama brought as a wedding present to his daughter by his disciple. Tears came in his eyes and sang, 'Oh! Rama did you walk all the way to come and bless me?' Yatheesan's rendering of this krithi brought tears in my eyes as well. Sri T V Pitchiappa was a renowned violinist in Sri Lanka. A composition by him in the ragam Jothiswaroopini came next.*

The main item was in the ragas, Kalyani and Revathy. Yatheesan did the alapana in both ragas, continued with the Thanam and Pallavi. His Guru Sri Gnanavarathan composed the Pallavi. He must have had ample confidence in his pupil's ability to compose such a difficult Pallavi. The pupil certainly did not disappoint him. Then followed the Ragamaliga. Flutist and Sri Gnanasundaram, accompanying on the violin played the ragas Hindolam, Madhuvanthi, Valaji and Kapi alternating. It was a delight to listen to. The concert concluded with a Bajan in Dwijavanthi, a Behag composition – 'Muruganin maru peyar azhagu', Lalgudi's Thillana in Desh and Thirupugazh in Bageshwari.

To invite flutist, Smt Mala Chandrasekar, was both appropriate and courageous attempt by the parents. The compere,

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Sri Ravi Sanguhan kept the script to a minimum and yet mentioned all the details. There was no intermission. The accompanying musicians , Sri Kirupakaran, Sri Prakash and Sri Balaji Krishnamurthy supported Yatheesan well. These are plus points of the Arangetram.

Sri Gnanavarathan is a very good teacher and nurtures his pupils well and Yatheesan is a very keen and dedicated pupil. Both of them can be proud of each other. The parents of Yatheesan, Dr Selvakumar and Sounthravalli must have invested a lot of time and effort in Yatheesan's musical journey. They too can be proud of their son because the debut was not a mere Arangetram. It was a full professional 'Kutcheri' in every sense of the word.

- Hindolam

(continued from page 35)

posal to the Cabinet in 2000 to initiate such a facility.

Following his death, President Mahinda Rajapaksa who was the then Prime Minister, proposed that the Institute be named after Kadirgamar considering his monumental service to the country. The Institution fills a huge vacuum that existed in the country for an independent forum that could generate research to contribute to national policy formulation. The institute in addition to carrying out policy research would also function as a forum where policy makers, academics and practitioners of diplomacy and foreign relations can meet and develop ideas. The identified areas of research were to include among others, National security, Peace building, strategic interests, post conflict scenarios and so forth.

Professor of International Relations at Oxford and member of International Institution of Strategic Studies, Professor Adam Roberts, paid a glowing tribute to his late friend.

He observed Kadirgamar's efforts which won unreserved fame and admiration in the international circuit. "Tall Trees are the ones that capture the wind," Roberts said.

A stamp was issued in honour of the late Minister with Minister of Posts and Telecommunications D.M. Jayaratne handing the first day cover to the Prime Minister. The inauguration was attended by Ministers, diplomats, Foreign dignitaries, Scholars and senior military officers.

India won't reconsider ban on LTTE

CHENNAI, August 10- : India's National security adviser M K Narayanan has said the Central government would not reconsider the ban imposed on the LTTE and that there would be no direct intervention in the Sri Lankan crisis. After a meeting with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi, Mr. Narayanan said, "I don't think the government of India has any doubt about the ban on the LTTE. We regard the LTTE as a dangerous organisation and the ban is necessary."

He was responding to a question on the Chief Minister's recent comment that the ban on the terror group was 'debatable'. He said the government was clear about no direct intervention in Sri Lanka, but would remain in the loop by using "all persuasion possible" to push the Lankan government to find an early solution to the ethnic crisis.

"So far our position is that we are not directly involved. However, India is an important factor and Sri Lanka is sensitive about our concerns. But as far as that is concerned, after our last experience with the LTTE, we do not want to get involved directly," Mr. Narayanan said.

Clarifying that there was complete unanimity between the Centre and state government on Indian foreign policy towards Sri Lanka, he said, "I told the Chief Minister how we told Sri Lankan foreign minister Mangala Samaraweera about our position — the importance of safety and security of the Tamils, devolution of powers and distinction between LTTE and other Tamils."

A LAND THAT'S SOWN WITH THE DEAD...

Look, look into the depths of yester years
No reflections, no waves but down under
Skeletons, skulls and teeth lie, to tell the story
To all, at all times what happened when and where.
When criminal acts are brushed aside,
Abominable deeds go beside unchecked.
The doers try to hide their sin
Under water and in shallow graves.
"Sin?" "Killing is a sin."
"YOU KILL. SO WE KILL."
We hear this loud cry echoing around.
Four hundred years of colonialism:
" Kai kaddi vaay puthaiththa kaalam"
Killings were rampant.
That's what our ancestors underwent.
Six decades of so- called "independence":
Still killings are rampant.
"Maar thaddi suthanthiram puthaipadum kaalam."
A land that's sown with the "Dead,"
Waste no time. Wake up and stare
Right into the eye of PEACE
With Sincerity and Honesty ,
Reconciliation and Reconstruction
And bring in peace with justice
To the aggrieved "Living."

-Varatha Shanmuganathan

Karuna faction opens office in Colombo:

August 10 - The political arm of the Karuna faction, the Thamil Makkal Viduthalai Pullikal (TMVP), opened its first political office in Colombo 9 August amid tight security. As police checked vehicles entering Schofield Place in Kollupitiya, where the TMVP office is located some tension prevailed in the area with even media persons covering the event having to undergo body checks by unarmed TMVP cadres.

TMVP spokesman Mr. Thuyavan declared open the new office by unveiling the party name board foilowed by multi-religious ceremonies and a speech by the Batticaloa political office head Mr. Pratheep.

Mr. Pratheep said the TMVP faction which operated a political and military wing would contest the next parliamentary elections in the North and East with the sole intention of accomplishing its 7-point political agenda.

"Due to the elimination of Tamil intellectuals, politicians and the terrorization of opponents in Sri Lanka a political vacuum had been created and the TMVP accepted the responsibility of providing political leadership to the Tamil people of Sri Lanka. Hence all the people and the diaspora who genuinely feel they can contribute to this cause are to be accommodated," Mr. Pratheep said.

The TMVP is registered as a political party in Sri Lanka. The party opened its first office in Batticaloa two months ago.

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